Virginia Tech Themed WordPress Templates

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Client:
Jennifer Sparrow

CS4624
Virginia Tech

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Executive Summary

Virginia Tech has a WordPress instance available for blogging for VT students, faculty, and staff. They have installed several commercial themes that allow for variety of customized blog sites. However, they do not have any themes that are developed in line with the Virginia Tech Style Guide. Specifically, the colors and the general layout should be similar to what is available in the university's current guideline. This project would be developing these themes that could be made available for faculty and departments.

Our project deliverables are three Virginia Tech customized themes, with all themes using a drag-and-drop feature. Drag-and-drop is a feature that allows the user to select a virtual object such as textbox, links, video, etc. and drag it into the theme layout. This allows for a more intuitive and easier interface for editing themes.

Our client is Dr. Jennifer Sparrow, Sr. Director, Networked Knowledge Ventures and Emerging Technologies, Technology-enhanced Learning and Online Strategies (TLOS). Dr. Sparrow also introduced to us Crystal Farris and Brian Broniak who would also be working with us on this project. After our first meeting with our client, they requested a template similar to the www.vt.edu website. This is to present a more unified look across the university. So for our first theme, we created a template based on the Eclipse theme in WordPress. We changed the layout and color to match the www.vt.edu website. For our second template, we decided to use a VT Wordpress provided theme. We decided to use the Computer Science courses website to model the template and after looking at the available themes, we decide to use Headway to create the child template. After much consideration and research, we decided to redo our first eclipse child theme in headway.

For the tools we had at hand, we used BitNami, a WordPress client, together with NotePad++ and Google Chrome Developer tools. For the second template, we used the VT WordPress Blog and Headway visual editor. The developer languages we used were HTML (for the design of the web template), PHP (for the functionalities such as index, posts, images, etc.) and CSS (for creating the style of the web template)

After creating the three templates, we met with our clients to give a presentation. We gave our clients a walkthrough of the process in creating child themes through the eclipse theme and headway theme. We showed out clients the three fully made templates, together with the instructions on how to import and apply the templates to future websites.

We hope our project will make a good impact on the Virginia Tech blogging community. Currently the university-wide blogging platform has over 1600 individual users. A high growth rate is expected as faculty adopts the platform for personal Virginia Tech affiliation websites. As a result, our pre-made templates would allow TLOS to market WordPress to a larger university

audience and ensure that future websites adhere to Virginia Tech Design guidelines to create a uniform look.

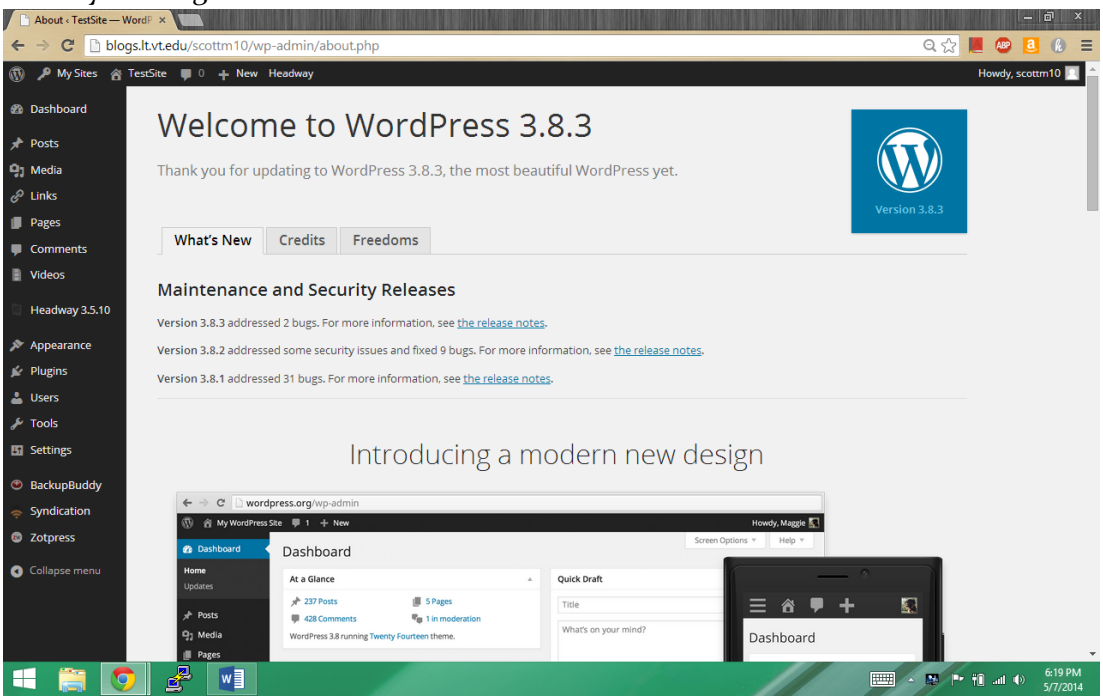
Users' Manual

(All screen shots accompany the immediate text above the screen shot.)

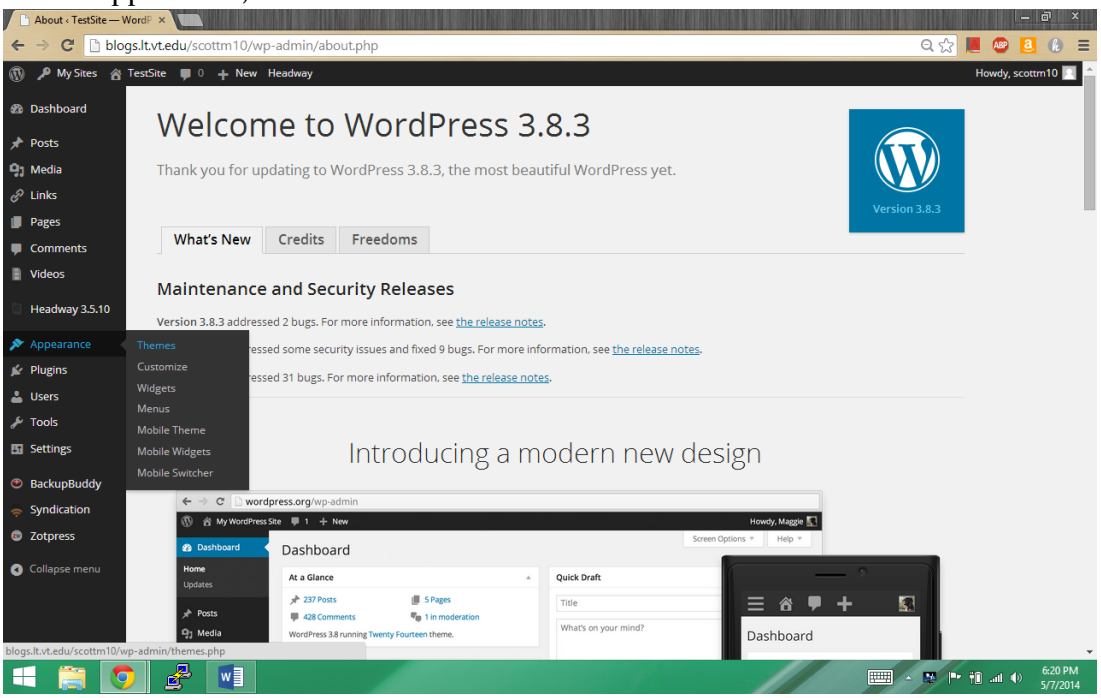
Using a Child Theme on Headway

To use a child theme on Headway, follow the steps below.

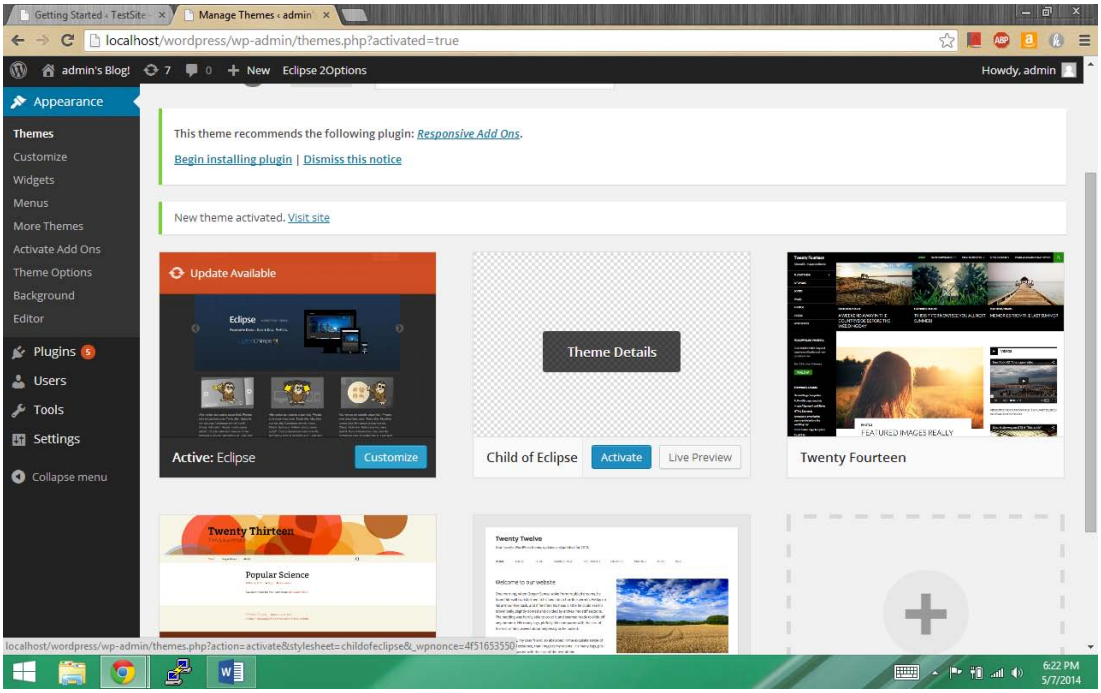
1. Go to your Virginia Tech WordPress dashboard.



2. Under Appearance, select Themes.



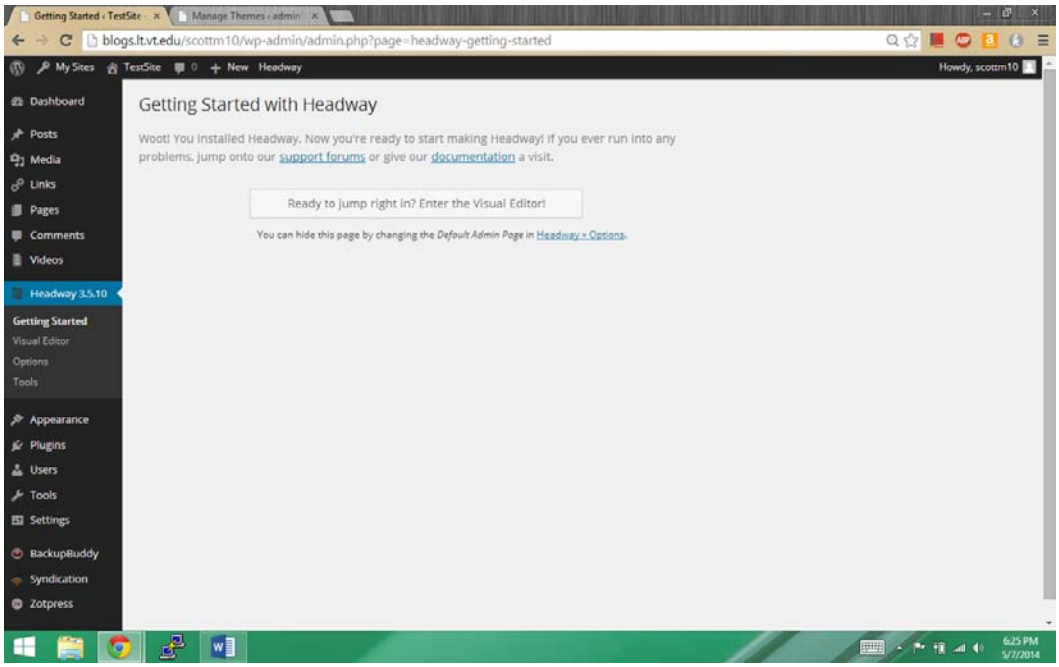
3. Press Activate on the theme of your choice.



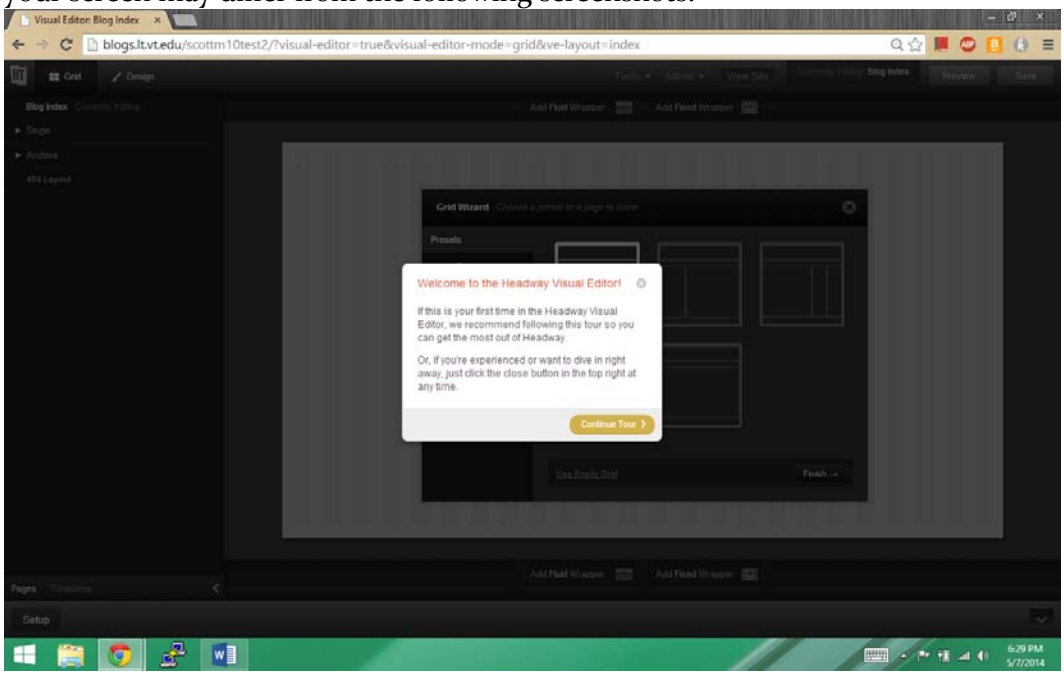
4. Congratulations, you are now using the child theme of your choice. Customize it like any other WordPress Theme.

Using Skins with Headway Base

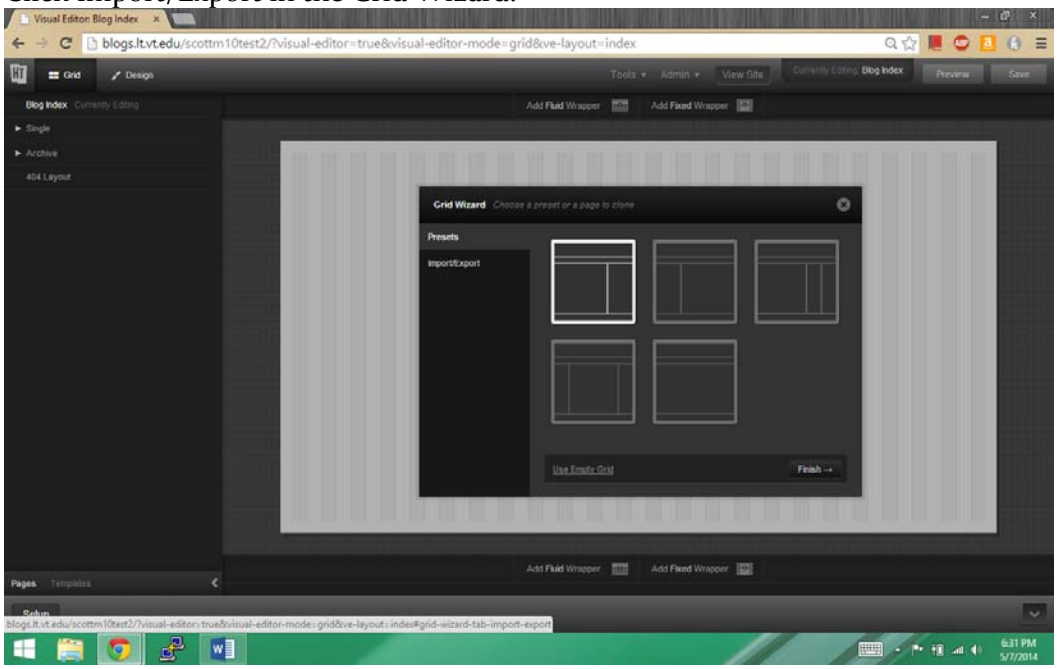
1. Select the Headway Base theme using the steps listed in the Using a Child Theme Section.
2. Press the “Ready to jump right in? Enter the Visual Editor!” button.


Getting Started with Headway
Woot! You installed Headway. Now you're ready to start making Headway! If you ever run into any problems, jump onto our support forums or give our documentation a visit.
Ready to jump right in? Enter the Visual Editor!
You can hide this page by changing the Default Admin Page in Headway > Options.

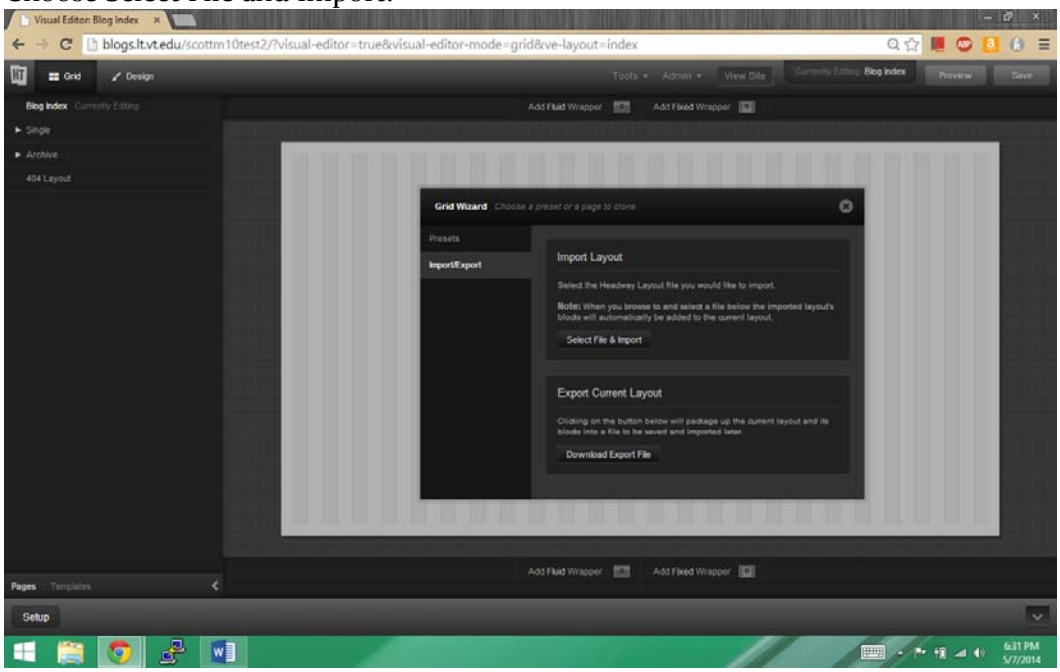
3. If interested click follow tour to allow the site to teach you about the visual editor. If not, press the x in the upper right corner of the popup. Note: If you continue the tour, your screen may differ from the following screenshots.


Welcome to the Headway Visual Editor!
If this is your first time in the Headway Visual Editor, we recommend following this tour so you can get the most out of Headway.
Or, if you're experienced or want to dive in right away, just click the close button in the top right at any time.
Continue Tour

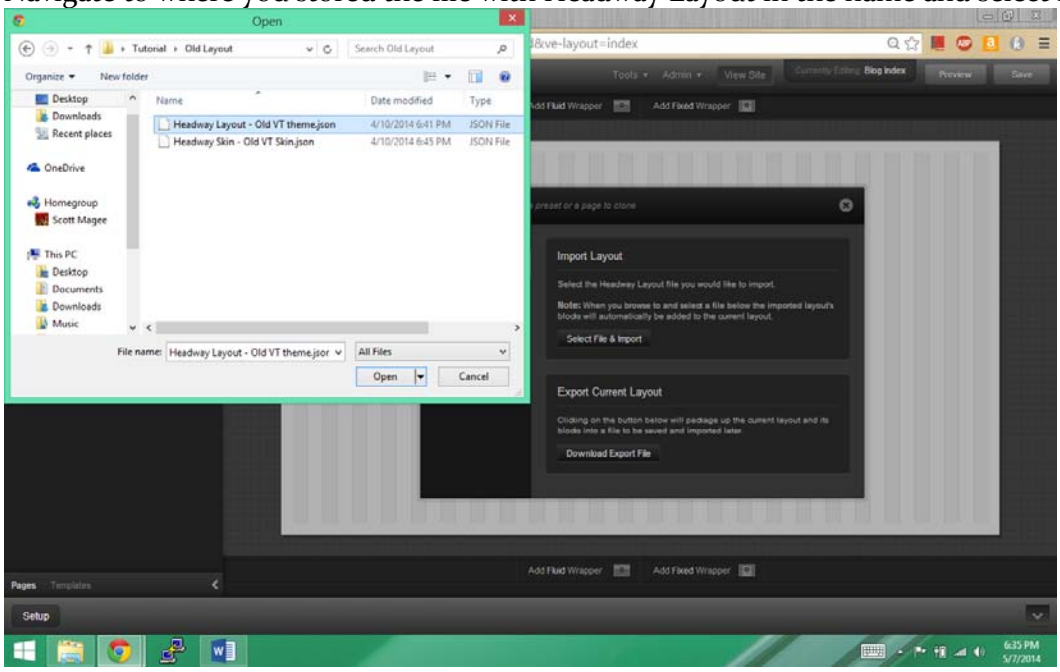
4. Click Import/Export in the Grid Wizard.



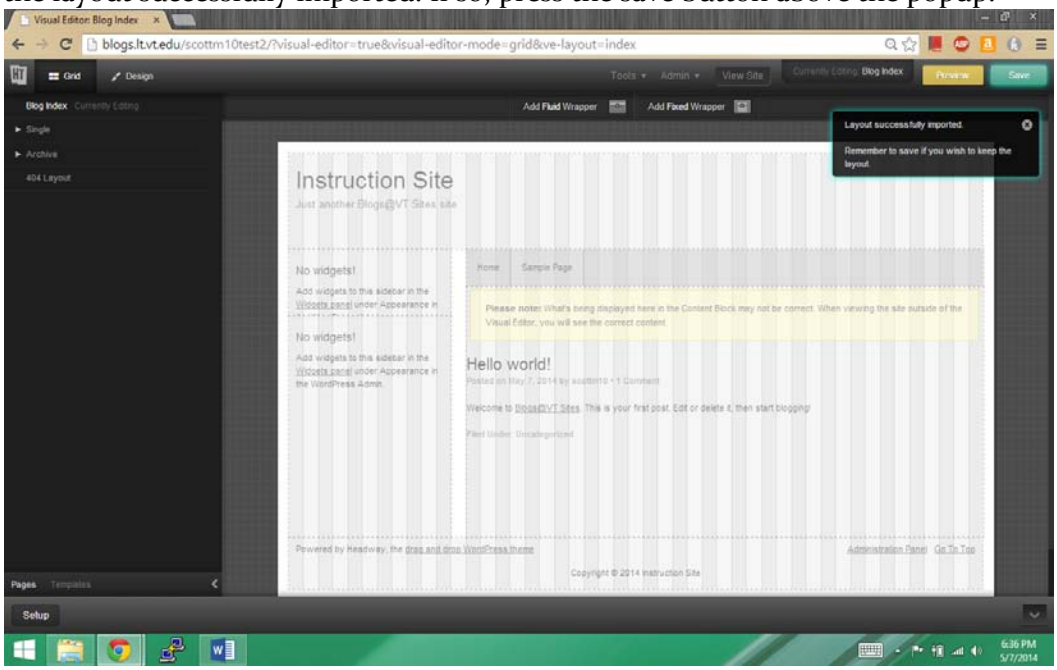
5. Choose Select File and Import.


Visual Editor: Blog Index
blogs.lt.vt.edu/scottm10test2/?visual-editor=true&visual-editor-mode=grid&ve-layout=index
Grid
Design
Tools
Admin
View Site
Preview
Save
Blog Index
Add Fluid Wrapper
Add Fixed Wrapper
Grid Wizard
Choose a preset or a page to clone
Presets
Import/Export
Import Layout
Select the Headway Layout file you would like to import.
Note: When you browse to and select a file below the imported layout's blocks will automatically be added to the current layout.
Select File & Import
Export Current Layout
Clicking on the button below will package up the current layout and its blocks into a file to be saved and imported later.
Download Export File
Pages
Templates
Setup

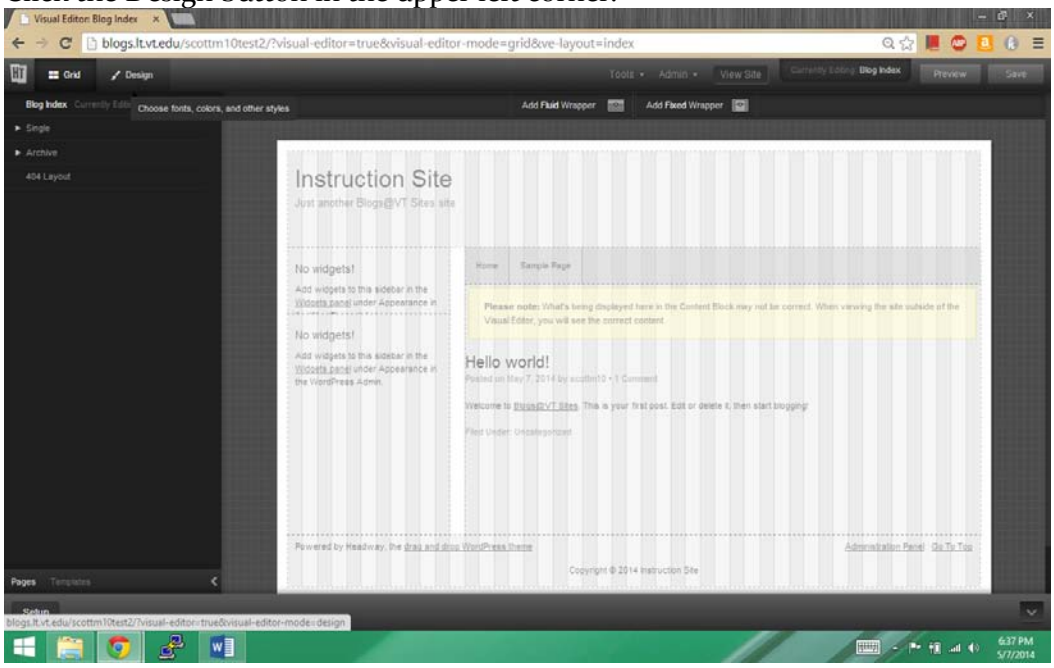
6. Navigate to where you stored the file with Headway Layout in the name and select it.



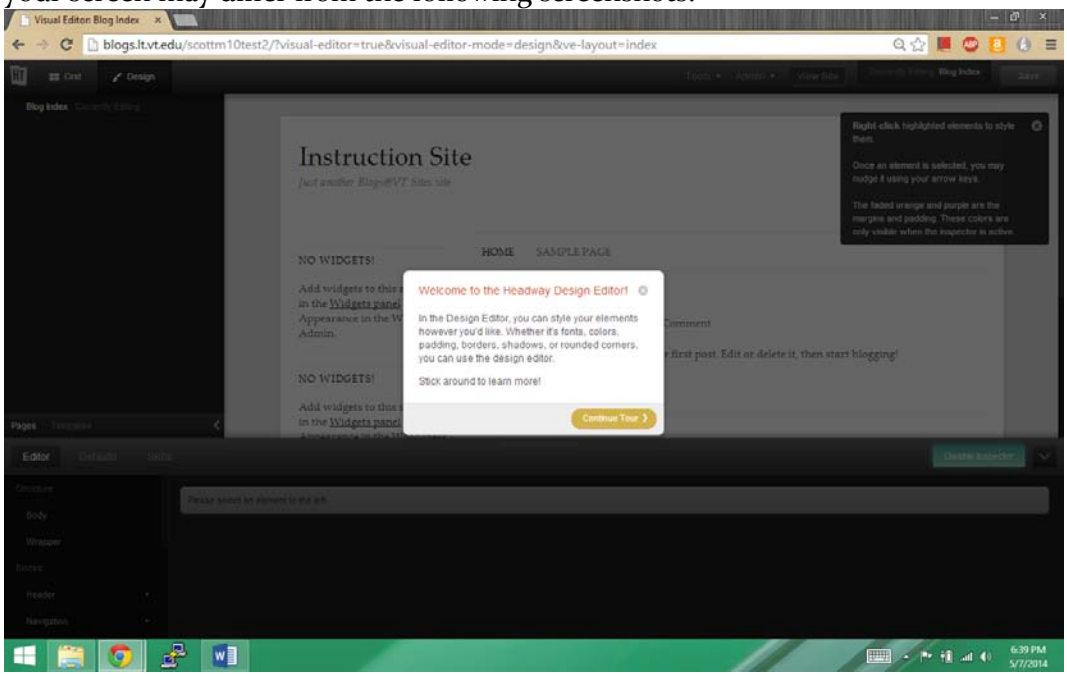
7. After a moment, you should see a popup in the upper right-hand corner telling you if the layout successfully imported. If so, press the save button above the popup.



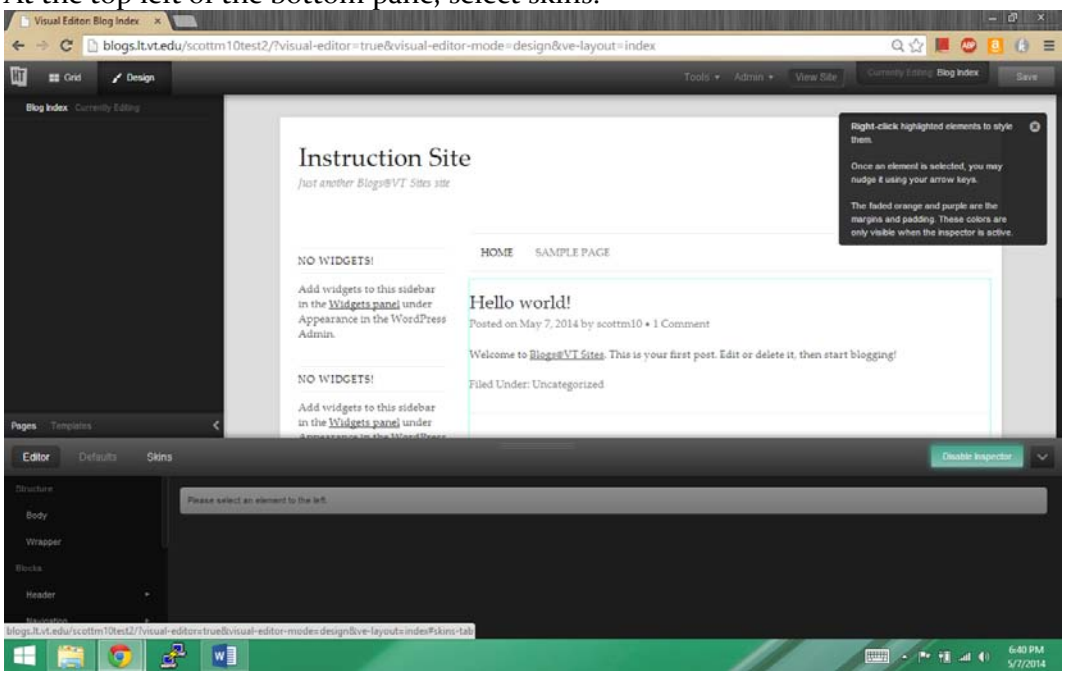
8. Click the Design button in the upper left corner.



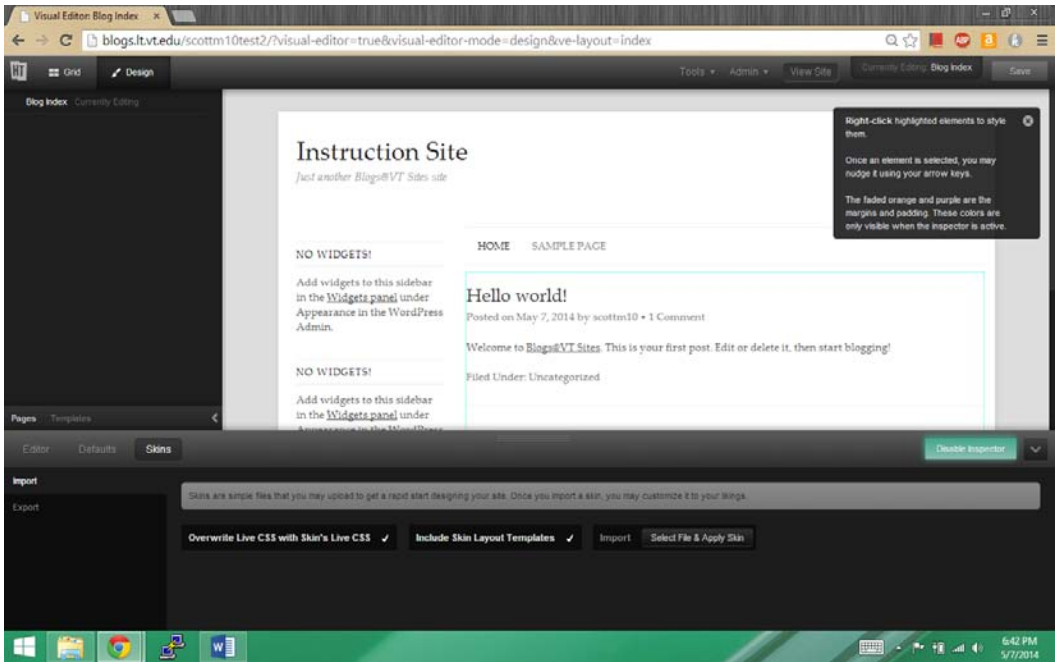
9. Again you will be given a popup offering to show you around the visual editor. If interested click follow tour to allow the site to teach you about the visual editor. If not, press the x in the upper right corner of the popup. Note: If you continue the tour, your screen may differ from the following screenshots.


Visual Editor: Blog Index
blogs.lt.vt.edu/scottm10test2/?visual-editor=true&visual-editor-mode=design&ve-layout=index
Instruction Site
Welcome to the Headway Design Editor!
In the Design Editor, you can style your elements however you'd like. Whether it's fonts, colors, padding, borders, shadows, or rounded corners, you can use the design editor.
Stick around to learn more!
Continue Tour

10. At the top left of the bottom pane, select skins.

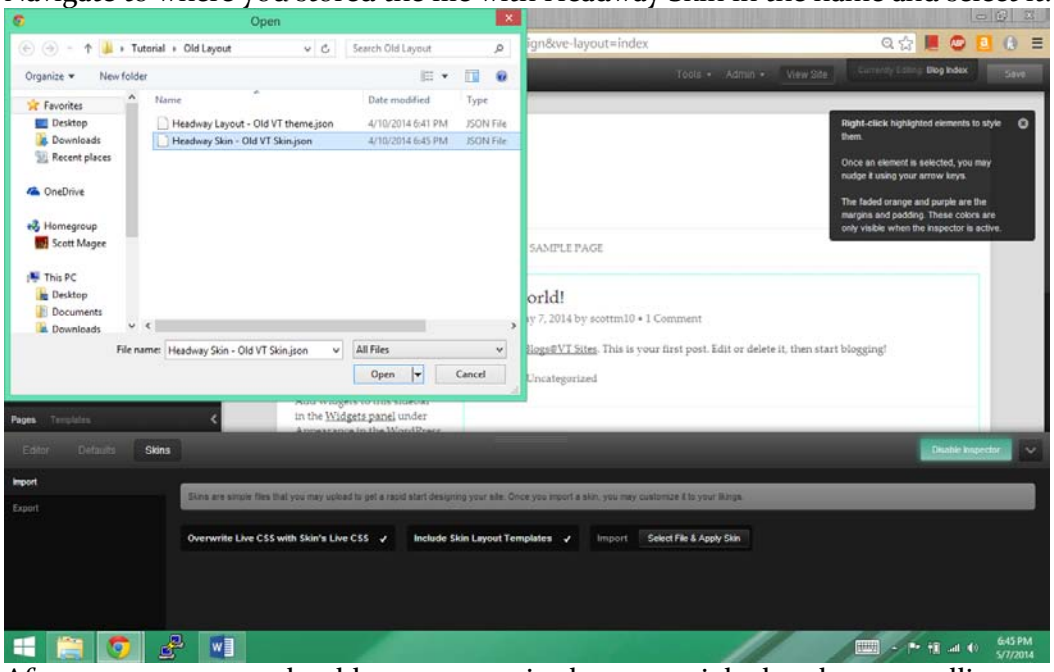


11. After clicking skins, ensure that you are on the import section, by clicking the button on the left hand side.


Visual Editor: Blog Index
blogs.lt.vt.edu/scottm10test2/?visual-editor=true&visual-editor-mode=design&ve-layout=index
Grid
Design
Tools
Admin
View Site
Blog Index
Save
Instruction Site
Just another Blogs@VT Sites site
HOME
SAMPLE PAGE
NO WIDGETS!
Add widgets to this sidebar in the Widgets panel under Appearance in the WordPress Admin.
Hello world!
Posted on May 7, 2014 by scottm10 • 1 Comment
Welcome to Blogs@VT Sites. This is your first post. Edit or delete it, then start blogging!
Filed Under: Uncategorized
Right-click highlighted elements to style them.
Once an element is selected, you may nudge it using your arrow keys.
The faded orange and purple are the margins and padding. These colors are only visible when the inspector is active.
Pages
Templates
Editor
Defaults
Skins
Disable Inspector
Import
Export
Skins are simple files that you may upload to get a rapid start designing your site. Once you import a skin, you may customize it to your liking.
Overwrite Live CSS with Skin's Live CSS
Include Skin Layout Templates
Import
Select File & Apply Skin
6:42 PM
5/7/2014

12. Ensure that both the Overwrite Live CSS with Skin's Live CSS" and "Include Skin Layout Templates" boxes are checked and press the "Select File & Apply Skin" button.

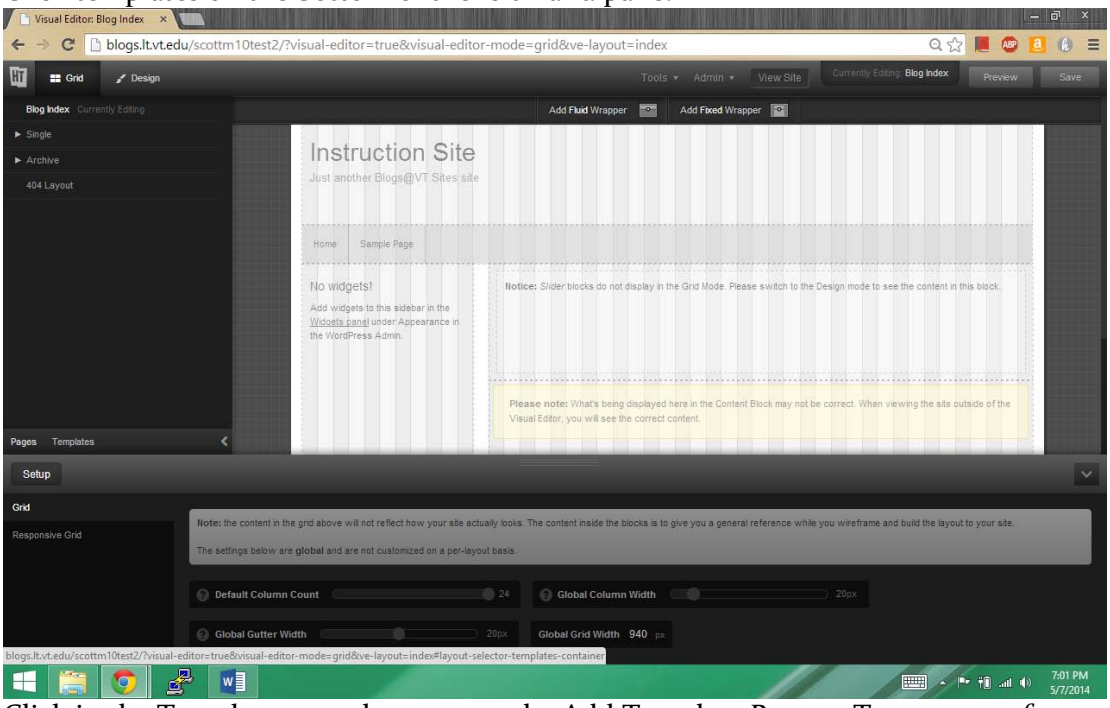
13. Navigate to where you stored the file with Headway Skin in the name and select it.



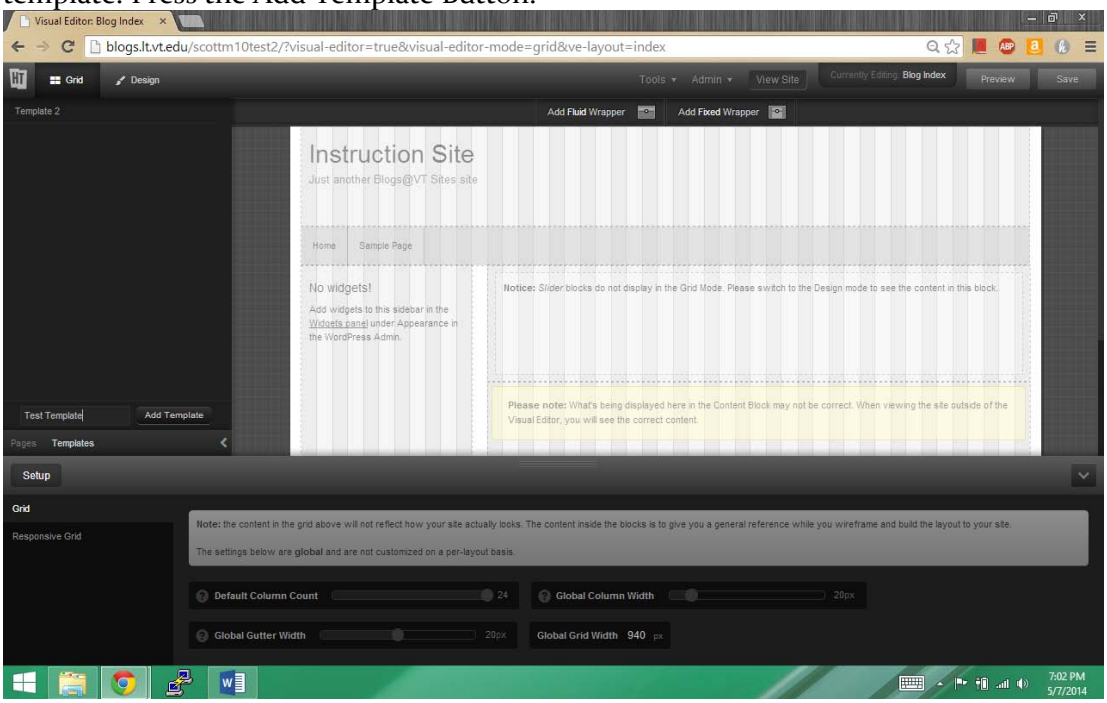
14. After a moment, you should see a popup in the upper right-hand corner telling you if the skin successfully imported. If so, press the save button in the upper-right corner.
15. Refresh the page.
16. Congratulations, you have successfully imported and are now using a custom skin with the Headway Base theme.

Saving a layout as a template

1. Click templates on the bottom of the left-hand pane.


Visual Editor: Blog Index
blogs.lt.vt.edu/scottm10test2/?visual-editor=true&visual-editor-mode=grid&ve-layout=index
Grid
Design
Tools
Admin
View Site
Currently Editing: Blog Index
Preview
Save
Blog Index Currently Editing
Single
Archive
404 Layout
Add Fluid Wrapper
Add Fixed Wrapper
Instruction Site
Just another Blogs@VT Sites site
Home
Sample Page
No widgets!
Add widgets to this sidebar in the Widgets panel under Appearance in the WordPress Admin.
Notice: Slider blocks do not display in the Grid Mode. Please switch to the Design mode to see the content in this block.
Please note: What's being displayed here in the Content Block may not be correct. When viewing the site outside of the Visual Editor, you will see the correct content.
Pages
Templates
Setup
Grid
Responsive Grid
Note: the content in the grid above will not reflect how your site actually looks. The content inside the blocks is to give you a general reference while you wireframe and build the layout to your site.
The settings below are global and are not customized on a per-layout basis.
Default Column Count
24
Global Column Width
20px
Global Gutter Width
20px
Global Grid Width
940
px
blogs.lt.vt.edu/scottm10test2/?visual-editor=true&visual-editor-mode=grid&ve-layout=index#layout-selector-templates-container
7:01 PM
5/7/2014

2. Click in the Template name box next to the Add Template Button. Type a name for your template. Press the Add Template Button.

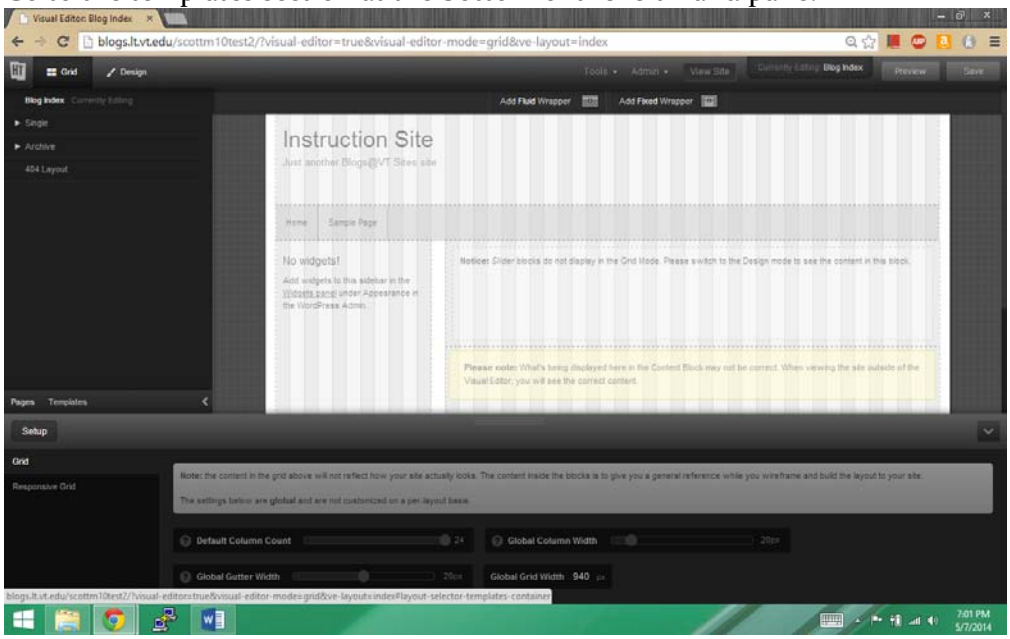

Visual Editor: Blog Index
blogs.lt.vt.edu/scottm10test2/?visual-editor=true&visual-editor-mode=grid&ve-layout=index
Grid
Design
Tools
Admin
View Site
Currently Editing: Blog Index
Preview
Save
Template 2
Add Fluid Wrapper
Add Fixed Wrapper
Instruction Site
Just another Blogs@VT Sites site
Home
Sample Page
No widgets!
Add widgets to this sidebar in the Widgets panel under Appearance in the WordPress Admin.
Notice: Slider blocks do not display in the Grid Mode. Please switch to the Design mode to see the content in this block.
Please note: What's being displayed here in the Content Block may not be correct. When viewing the site outside of the Visual Editor, you will see the correct content.
Test Template
Add Template
Pages
Templates
Setup
Grid
Responsive Grid
Note: the content in the grid above will not reflect how your site actually looks. The content inside the blocks is to give you a general reference while you wireframe and build the layout to your site.
The settings below are global and are not customized on a per-layout basis.
Default Column Count
24
Global Column Width
20px
Global Gutter Width
20px
Global Grid Width
940
px
7:02 PM
5/7/2014

3. Congratulations, you have successfully saved your layout as a template.

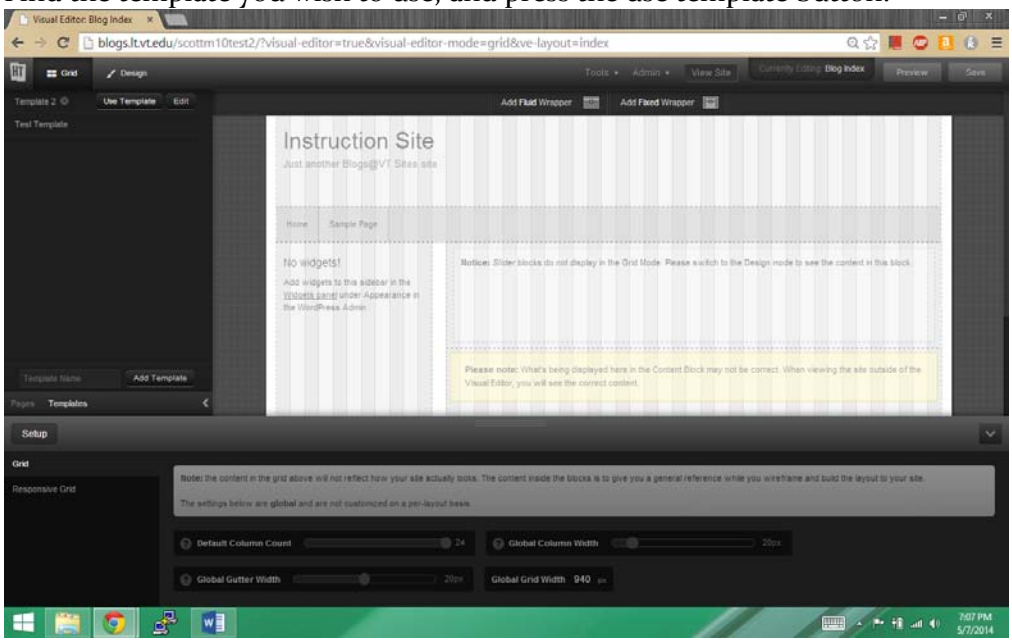
Using a Template

I. Non-editable

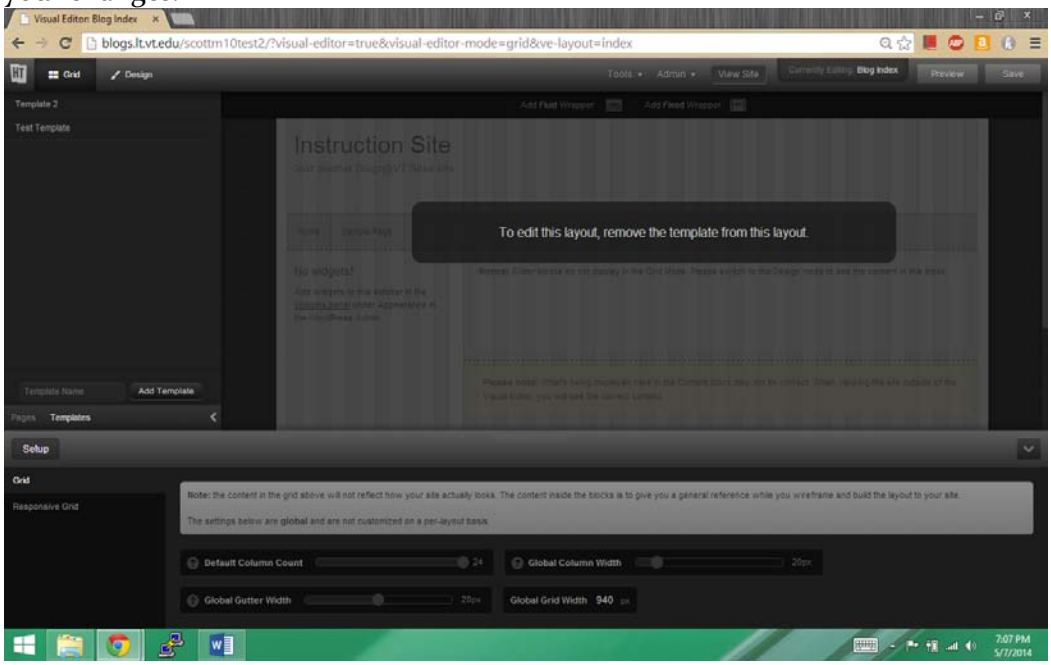
a. Go to the templates section at the bottom of the left-hand pane.



b. Find the template you wish to use, and press the use template button.

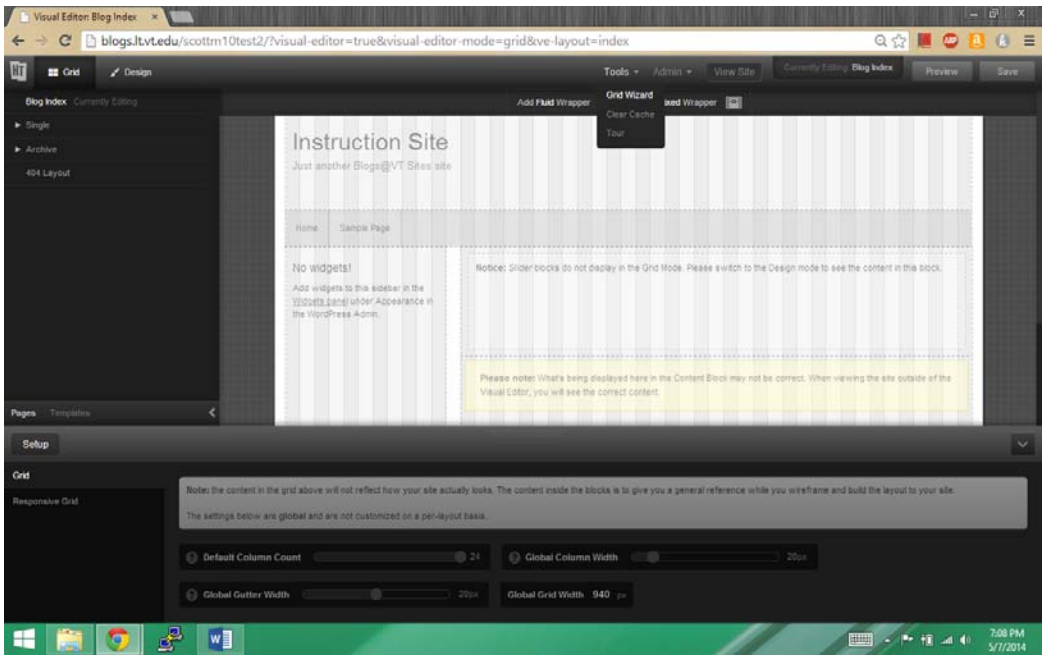


c. Congratulations, you are now using a non-editable template. Remember to save your changes.

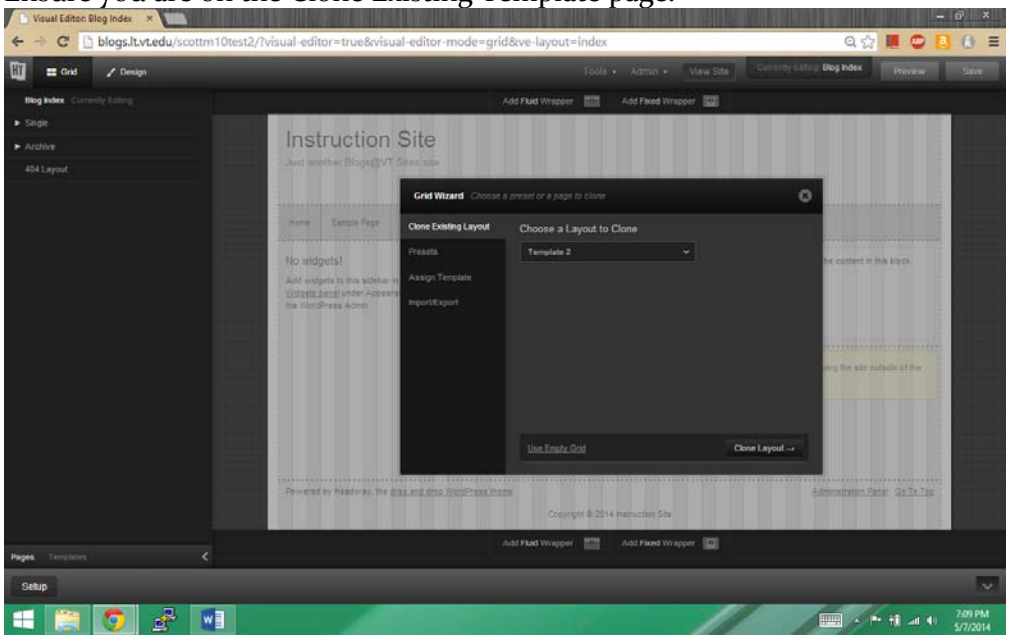


II. Editable Template

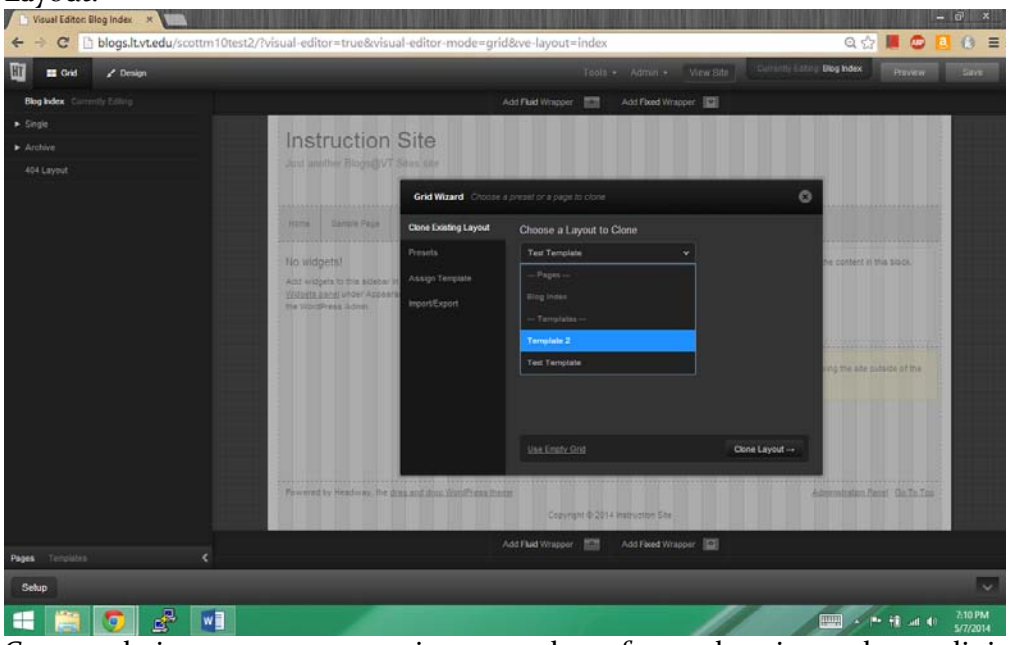
a. At the top of the screen, hover over tools. Select Grid Wizard from the drop-down menu.



b. Ensure you are on the Clone Existing Template page.



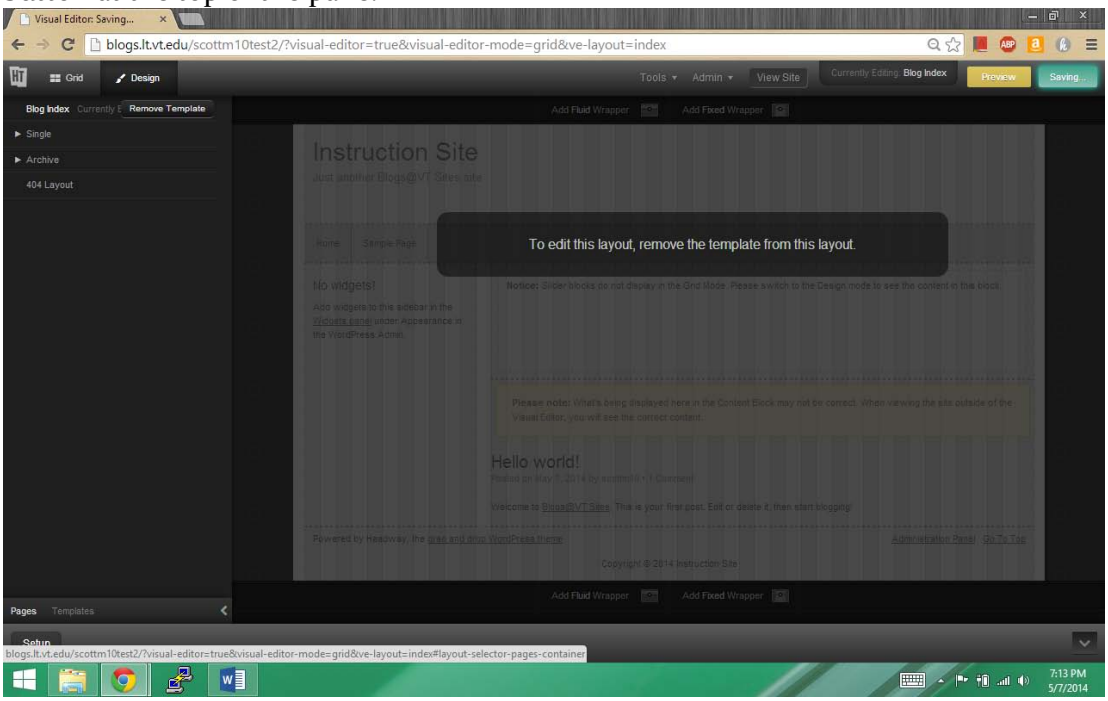
c. Select the template you wish to clone from the drop down list. And press Clone Layout.



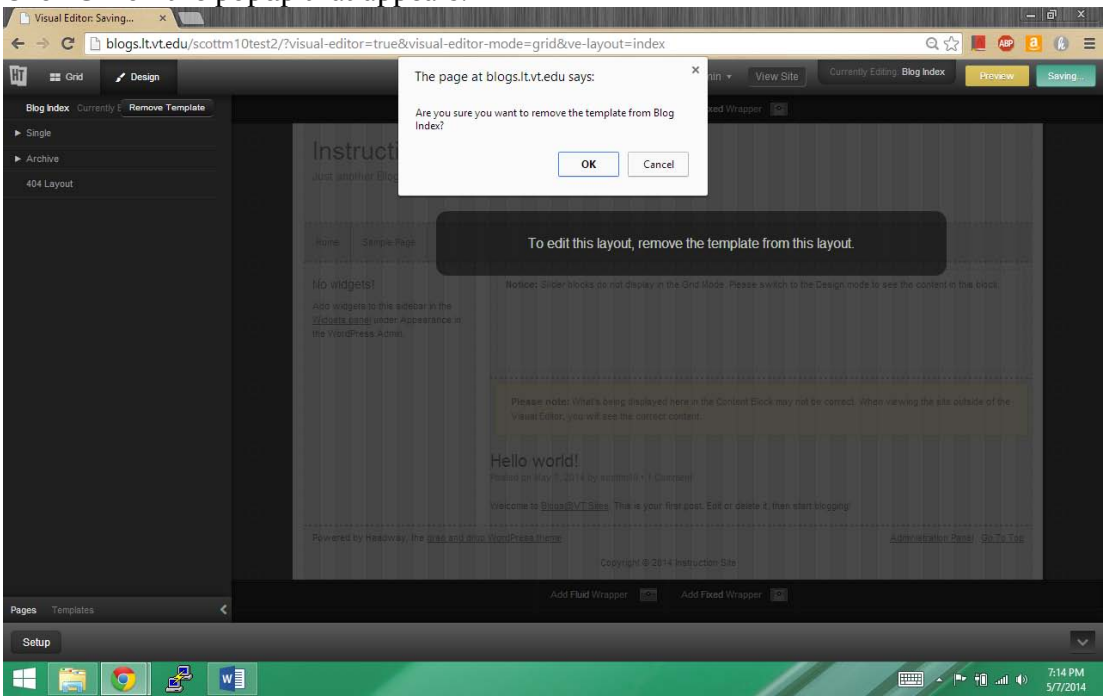
d. Congratulations, you are now using a template of your choosing and can edit it without worry. Remember to save your changes.

Removing a template

1. Click Pages at the bottom of the left-hand pane. Then press the “Remove Template” button at the top of the pane.



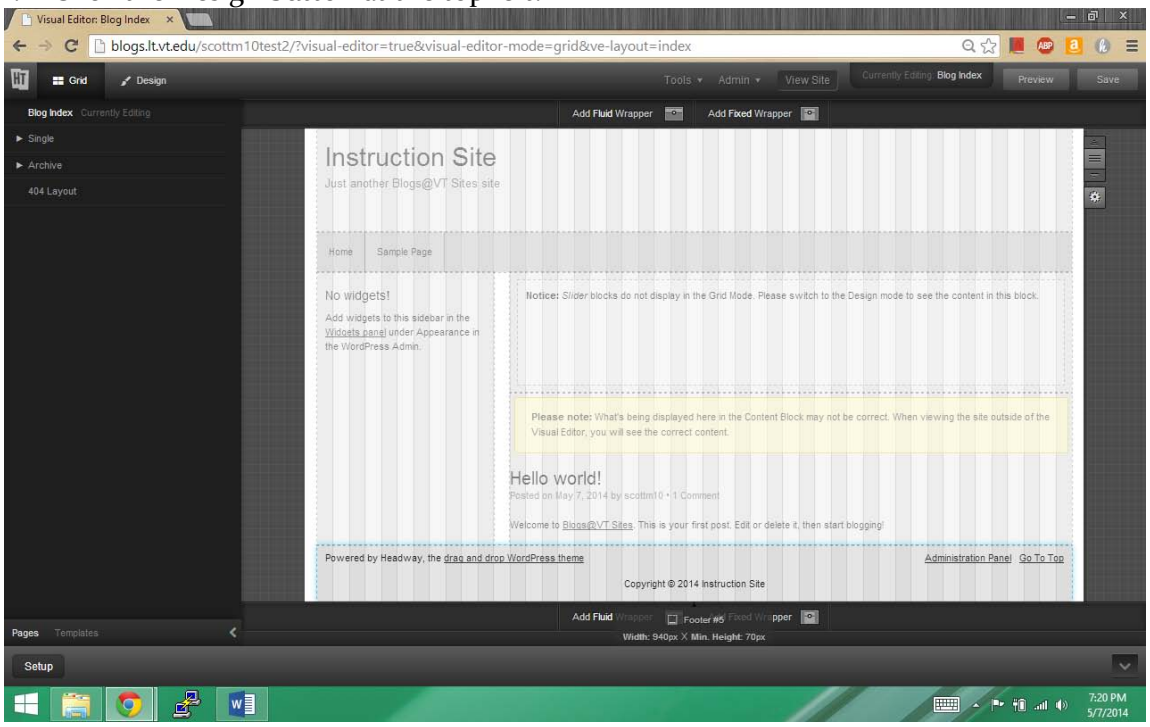
2. Click OK on the popup that appears.



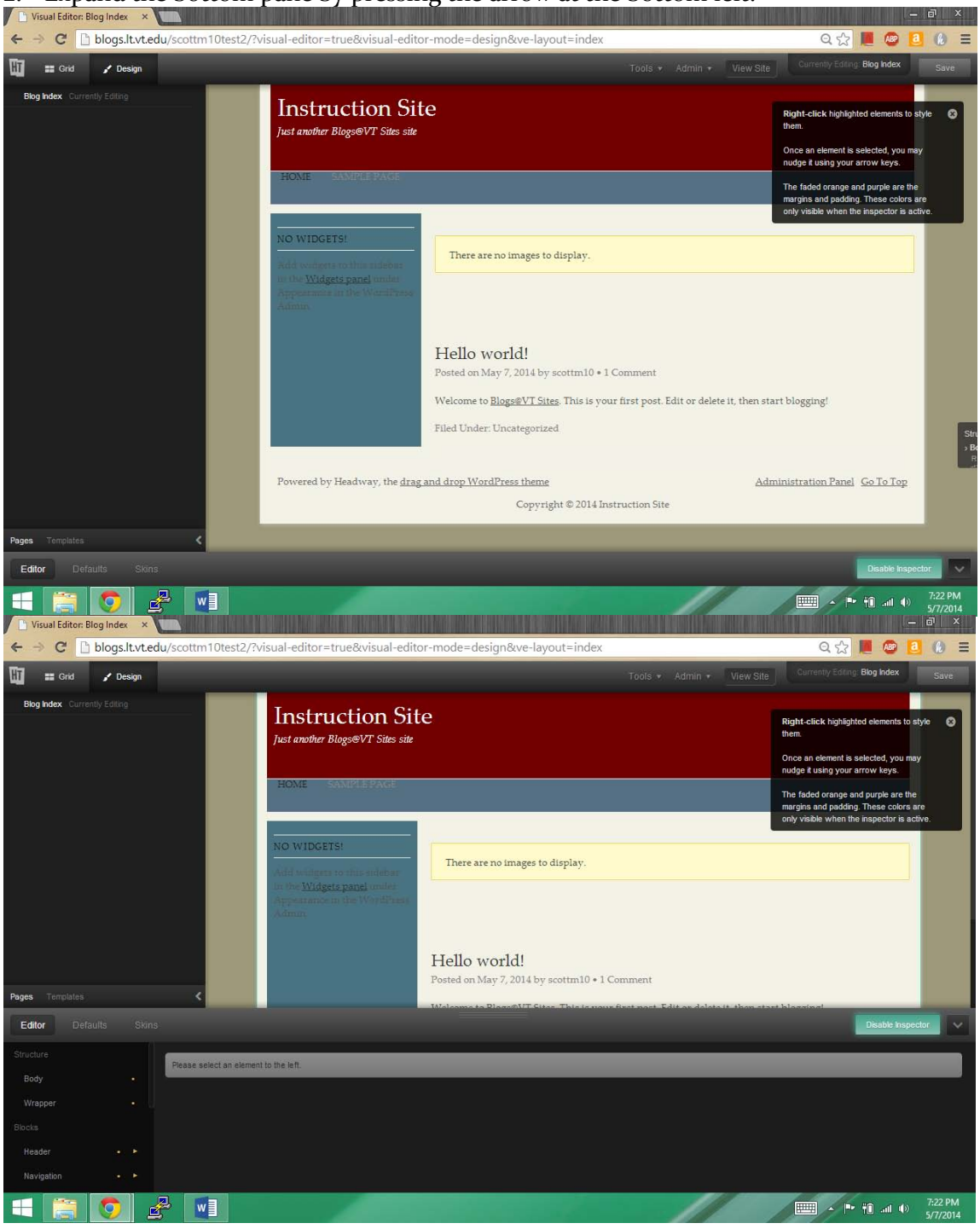
3. Congratulations, you have now removed the template from your site. Remember to Save any changes.

Exporting a Skin

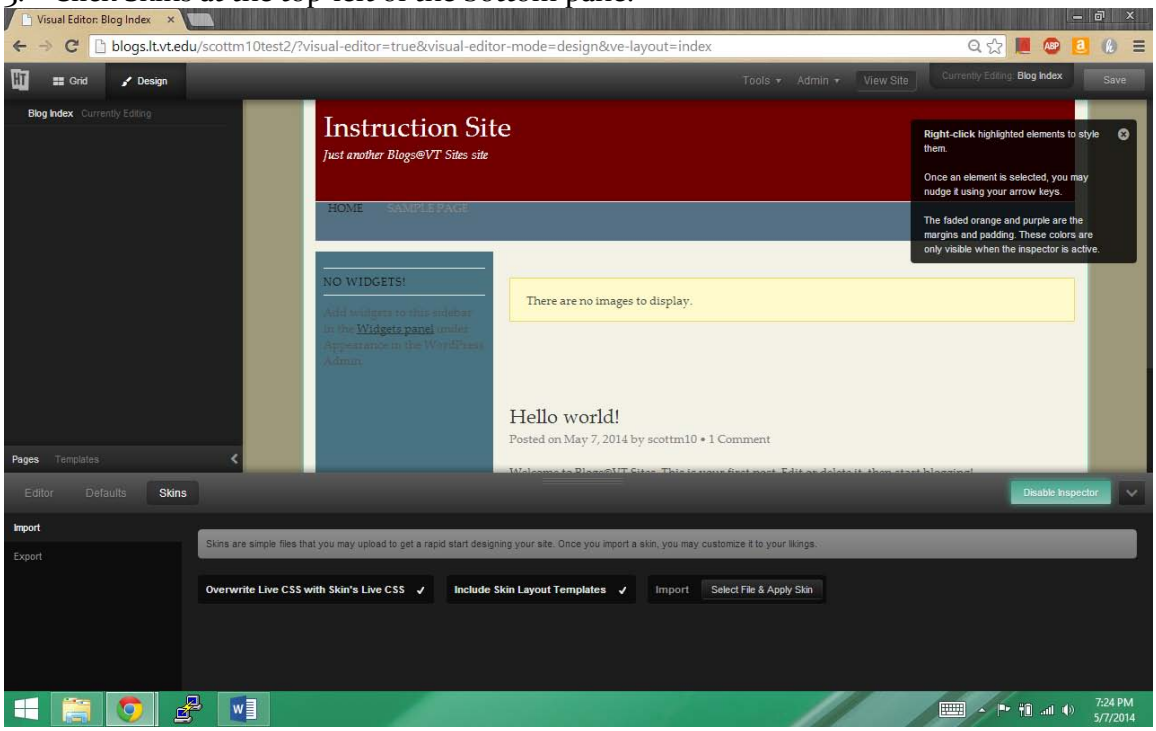
1. Click the Design button at the top left.


Visual Editor: Blog Index
blogs.lt.vt.edu/scottm10test2/?visual-editor=true&visual-editor-mode=grid&ve-layout=index
Grid
Design
Tools
Admin
View Site
Currently Editing: Blog Index
Preview
Save
Blog Index Currently Editing
Single
Archive
404 Layout
Add Fluid Wrapper
Add Fixed Wrapper
Instruction Site
Just another Blogs@VT Sites site
Home
Sample Page
No widgets!
Add widgets to this sidebar in the Widgets panel under Appearance in the WordPress Admin.
Notice: Slider blocks do not display in the Grid Mode. Please switch to the Design mode to see the content in this block.
Please note: What's being displayed here in the Content Block may not be correct. When viewing the site outside of the Visual Editor, you will see the correct content.
Hello world!
Posted on May 7, 2014 by scottm10 • 1 Comment
Welcome to Blogs@VT Sites. This is your first post. Edit or delete it, then start blogging!
Powered by Headway, the drag and drop WordPress theme
Administration Panel
Go To Top
Copyright © 2014 Instruction Site
Add Fluid Wrapper
Footer #5
Add Fixed Wrapper
Width: 940px X Min. Height: 70px
Pages
Templates
Setup
7:20 PM
5/7/2014

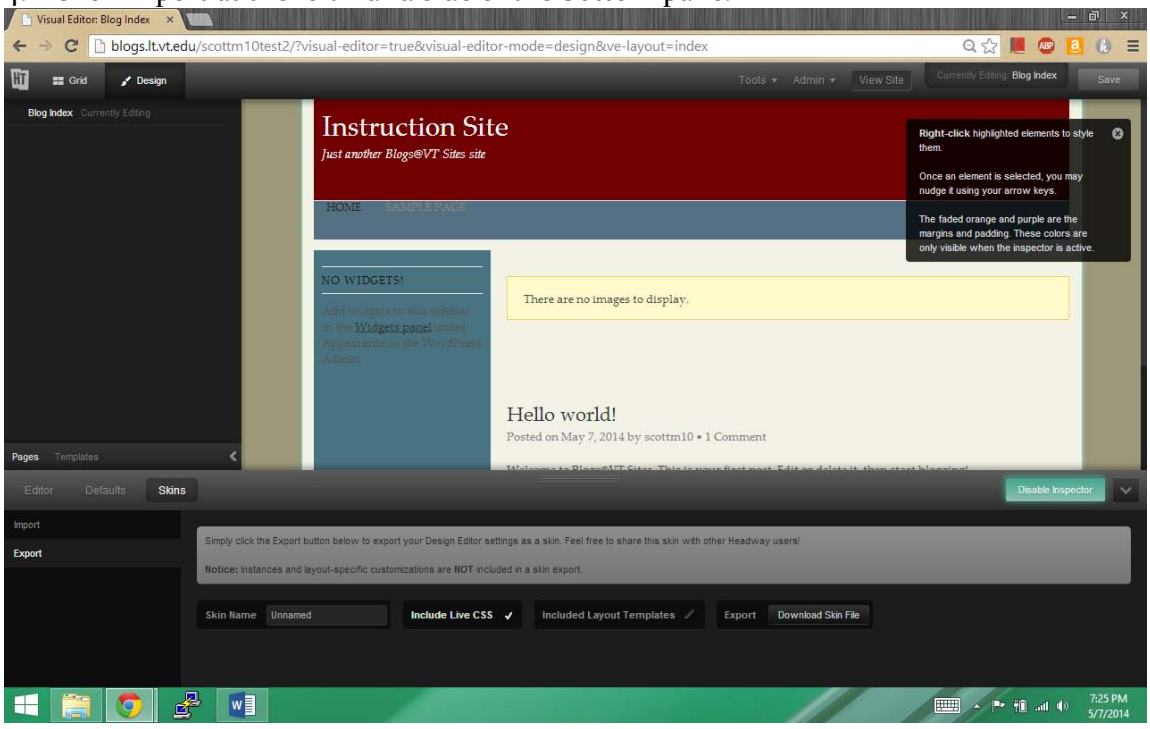
2. Expand the bottom pane by pressing the arrow at the bottom left.



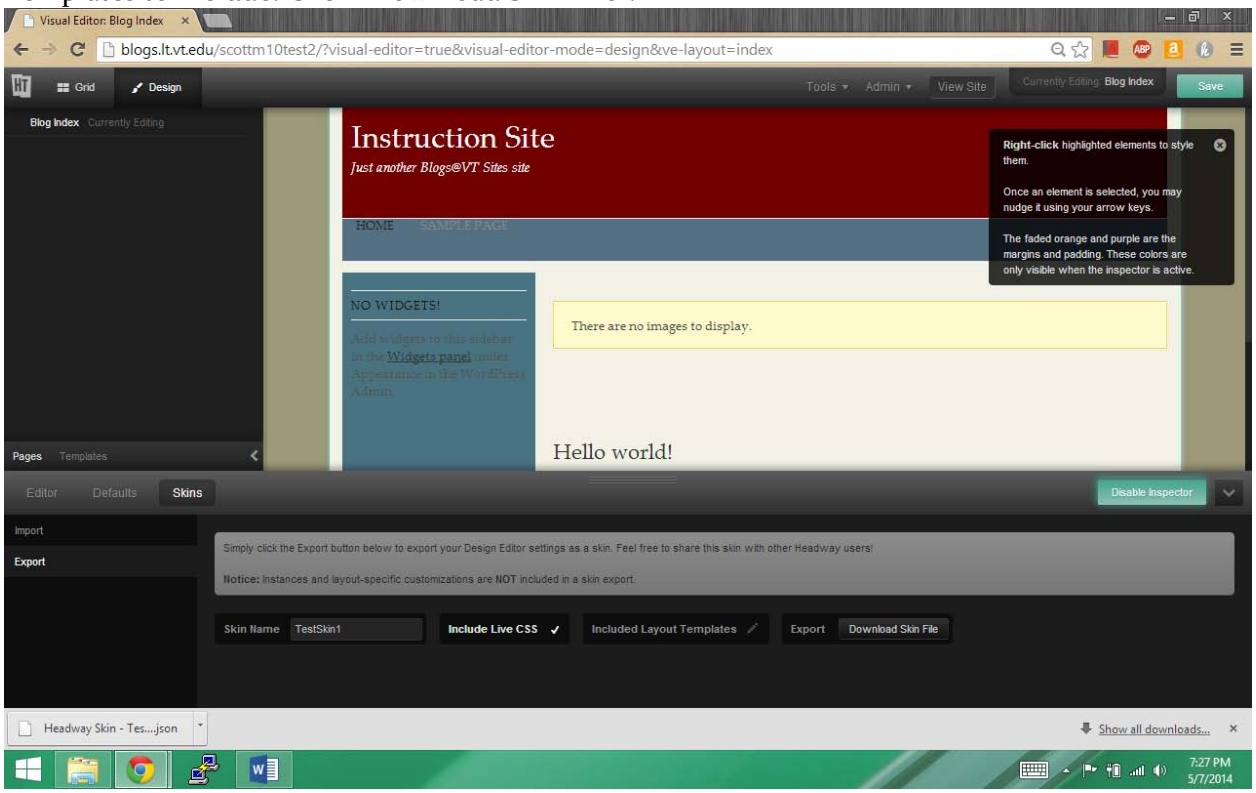
3. Click Skins at the top-left of the bottom pane.


Visual Editor: Blog Index
blogs.lt.vt.edu/scottm10test2/?visual-editor=true&visual-editor-mode=design&ve-layout=index
Grid
Design
Tools
Admin
View Site
Currently Editing: Blog Index
Save
Blog Index Currently Editing
Instruction Site
Just another Blogs@VT Sites site
HOME
SAMPLE PAGE
Right-click highlighted elements to style them.
Once an element is selected, you may nudge it using your arrow keys.
The faded orange and purple are the margins and padding. These colors are only visible when the inspector is active.
NO WIDGETS!
There are no images to display.
Hello world!
Posted on May 7, 2014 by scottm10 • 1 Comment
Pages
Templates
Editor
Defaults
Skins
Disable Inspector
Import
Export
Skins are simple files that you may upload to get a rapid start designing your site. Once you import a skin, you may customize it to your likings.
Overwrite Live CSS with Skin's Live CSS
Include Skin Layout Templates
Import
Select File & Apply Skin
7:24 PM
5/7/2014

4. Click Export at the left-hand side of the bottom pane.



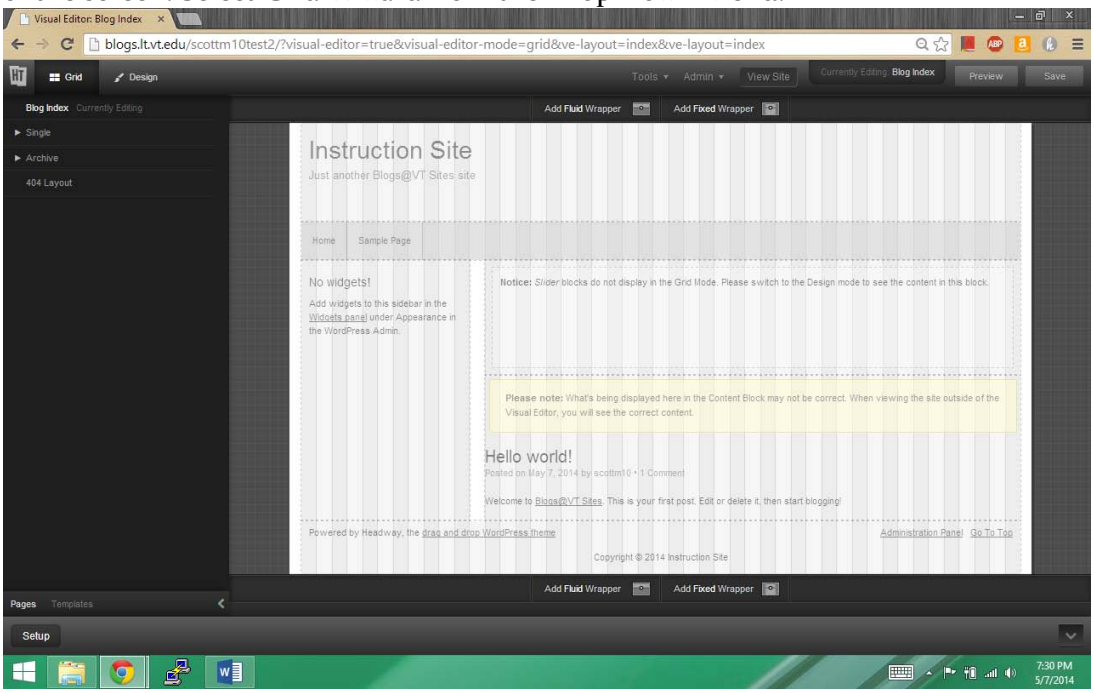
5. Name your skin. Ensure “Include Live CSS is checked”. If desired, specify Layout Templates to include. Click “Download Skin File”.



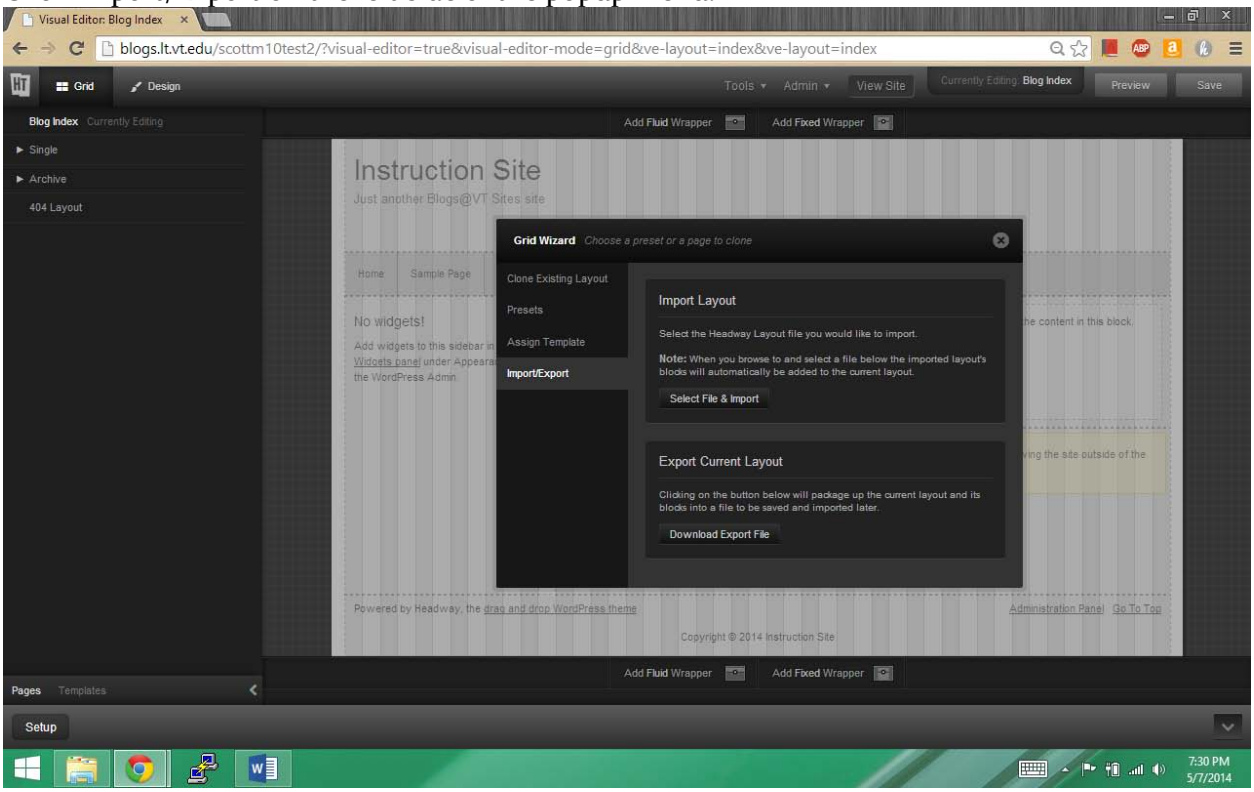
6. Congratulations, you have created a new skin file to send to others or use as a backup.

Export a Template

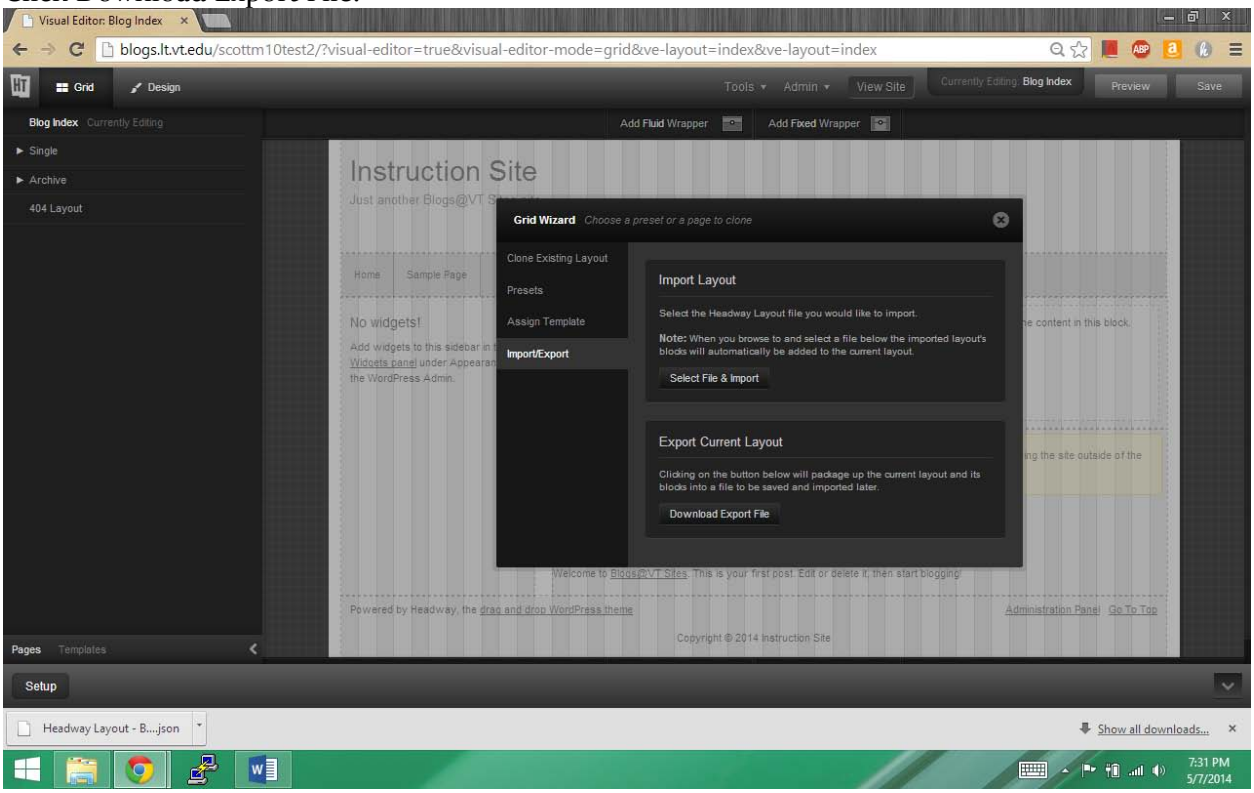
1. Ensure you are on Grid View. If not, press Grid at the top left. Hover over Tools at the top of the screen. Select Grid Wizard from the Drop Down Menu.


Visual Editor: Blog Index
blogs.lt.vt.edu/scottm10test2/?visual-editor=true&visual-editor-mode=grid&ve-layout=index&ve-layout=index
Grid
Design
Tools
Admin
View Site
Currently Editing: Blog Index
Preview
Save
Blog Index Currently Editing
Single
Archive
404 Layout
Add Fluid Wrapper
Add Fixed Wrapper
Instruction Site
Just another Blogs@VT Sites site
Home
Sample Page
No widgets!
Add widgets to this sidebar in the Widgets panel under Appearance in the WordPress Admin.
Notice: Slider blocks do not display in the Grid Mode. Please switch to the Design mode to see the content in this block.
Please note: What's being displayed here in the Content Block may not be correct. When viewing the site outside of the Visual Editor, you will see the correct content.
Hello world!
Posted on May 7, 2014 by scottm10 • 1 Comment
Welcome to Blogs@VT Sites. This is your first post. Edit or delete it, then start blogging!
Powered by Headway, the drag and drop WordPress theme
Administration Panel Go To Top
Copyright © 2014 Instruction Site
Pages Templates
Setup
7:30 PM
5/7/2014

2. Click Import/Export on the left side of the popup menu.



3. Click Download Export File.

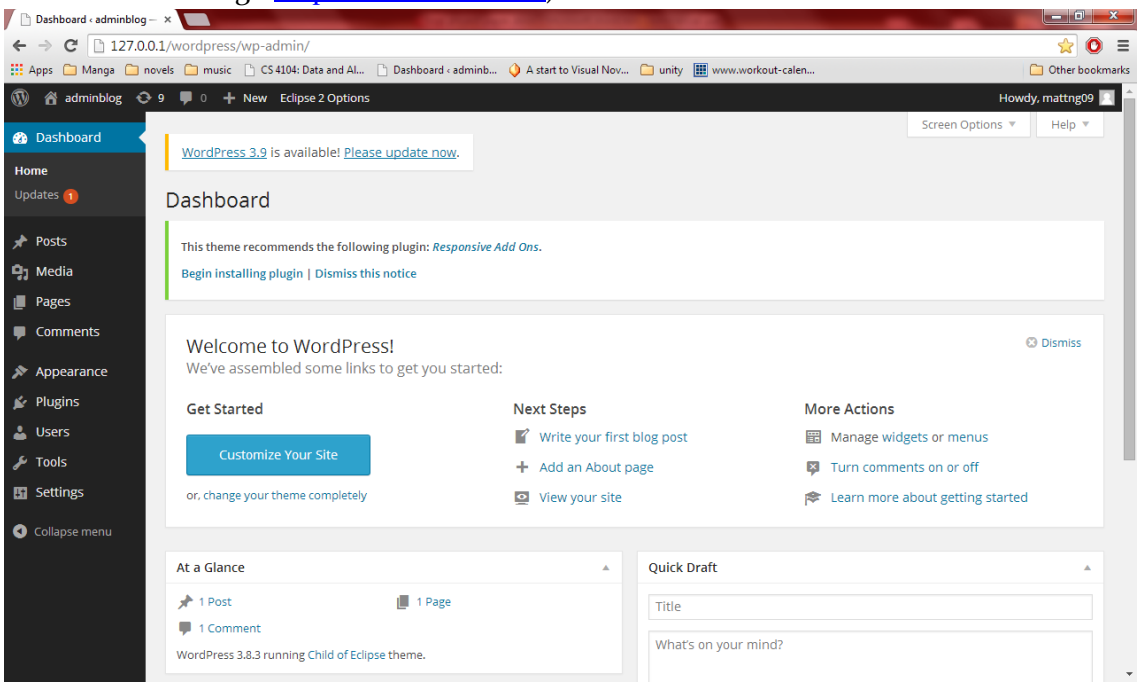


4. Congratulations, you now have a layout file that you can give to others or use a backup.

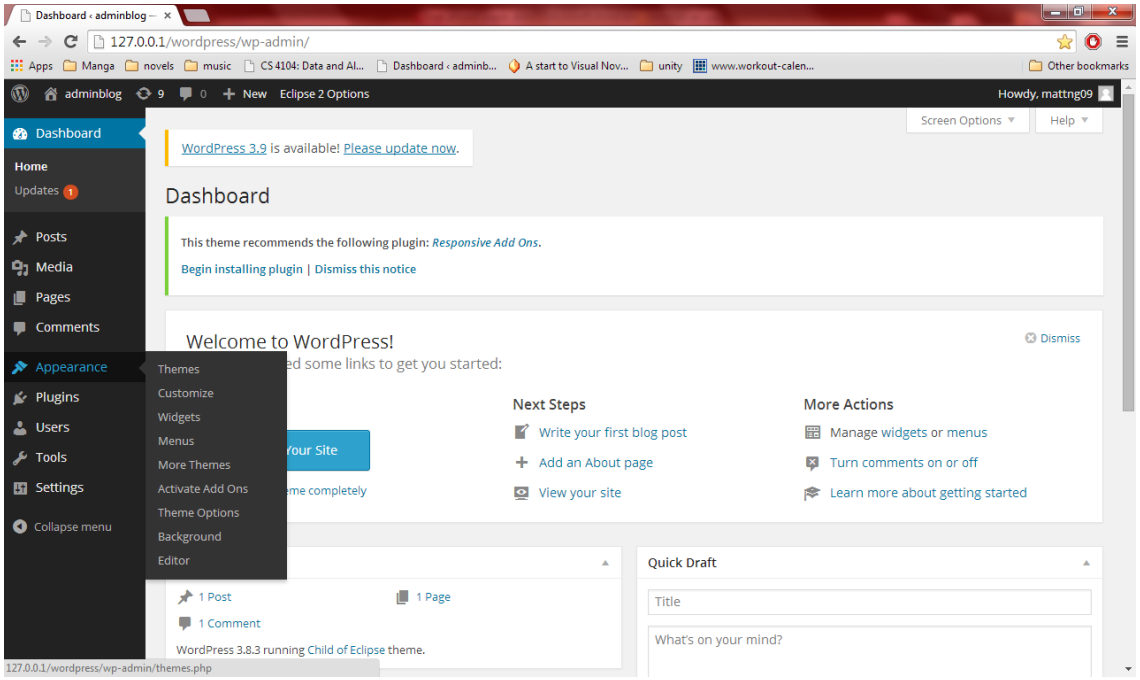
Using a Child Theme on Eclipse

To use a child theme on Eclipse, follow the steps below.

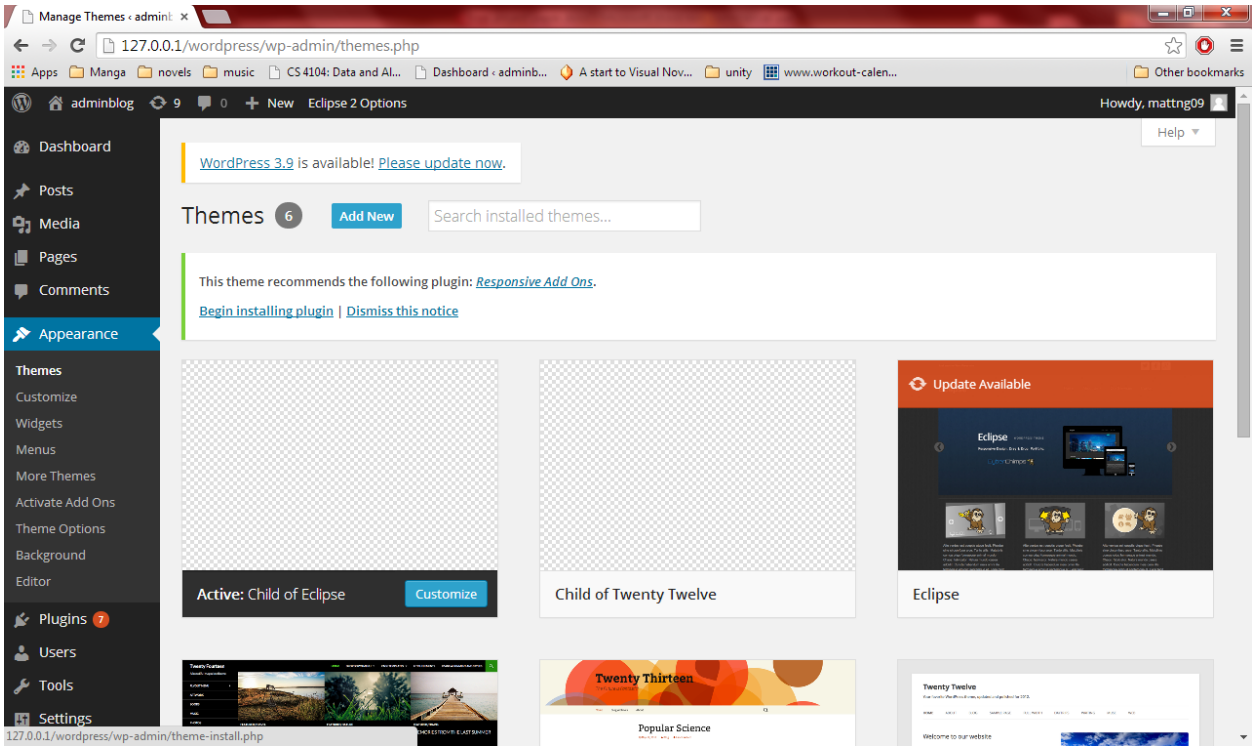
1. Log into the local Wordpress on your machine(The bitnami local servers can be downloaded through https://bitnami.com/)



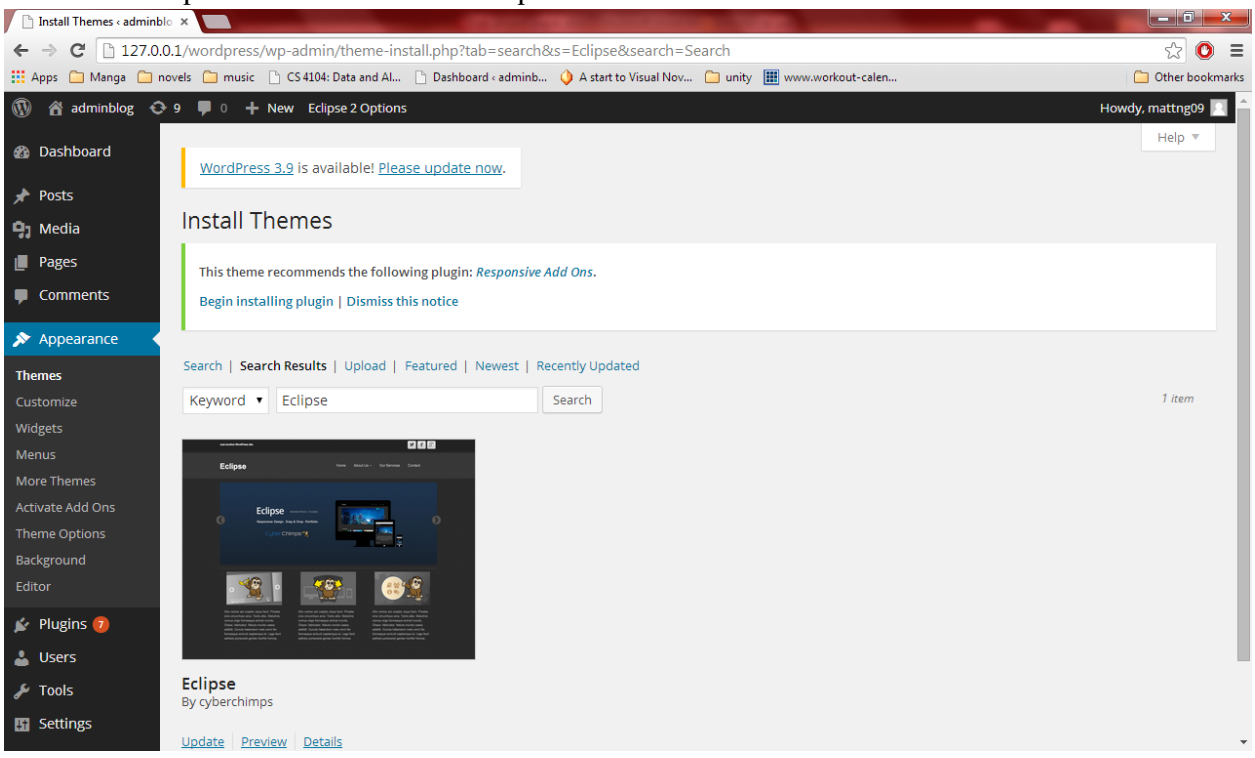
2. Scroll over the Appearance tab on the left and click on Themes



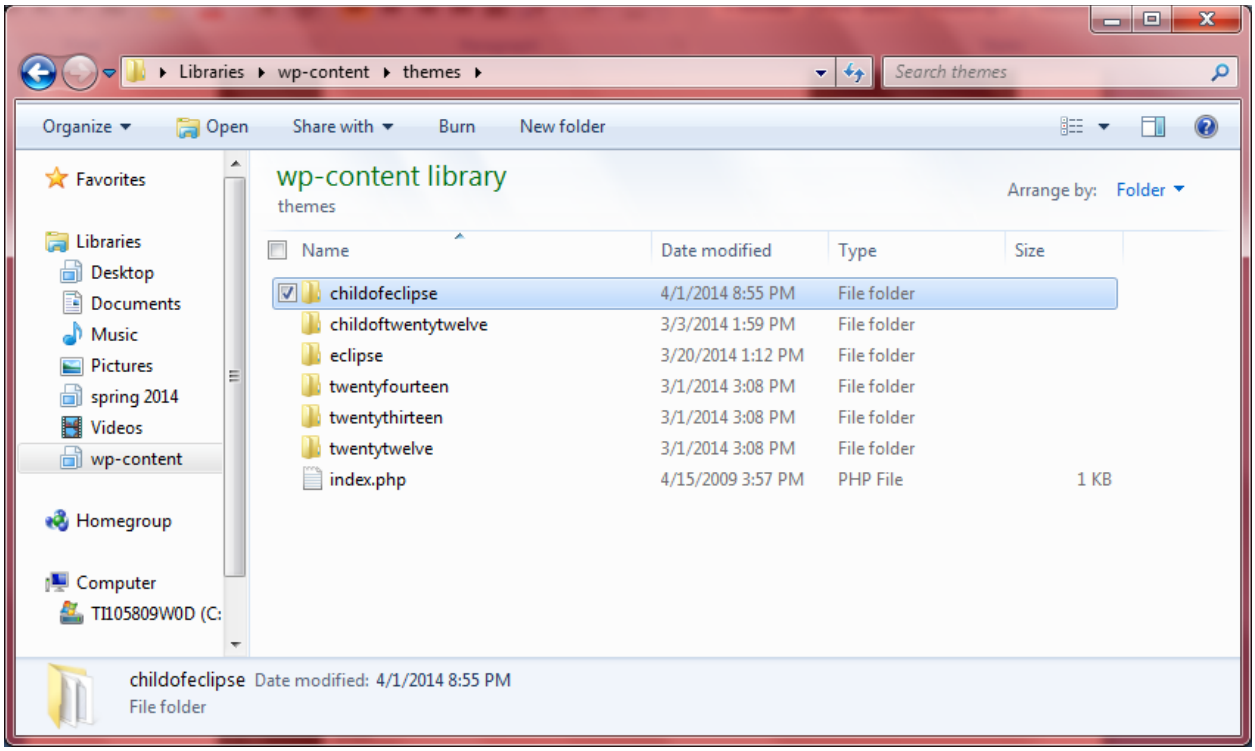
3. Click on the "Add New" button to download the Eclipse theme



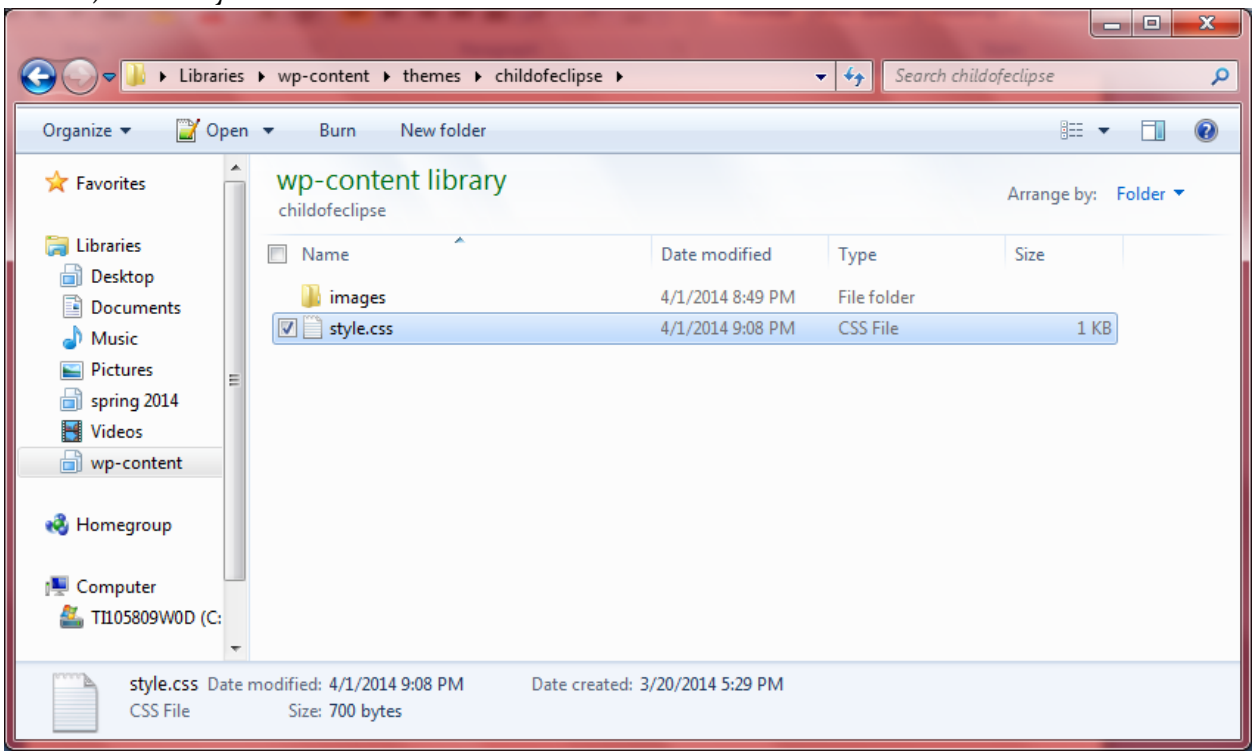
4. Search for Eclipse and download the Eclipse theme



5. Once it has finished downloading, Click on the themes tab to the left to make sure that the Eclipse theme has been downloaded
6. To create a child theme, find where your themes are stored (Our themes were stored in "C:\BitNami\wordpress-3.8.1-1\apps\wordpress\htdocs\wp-content\themes"). Next create a new folder called "ChildofEclipse"

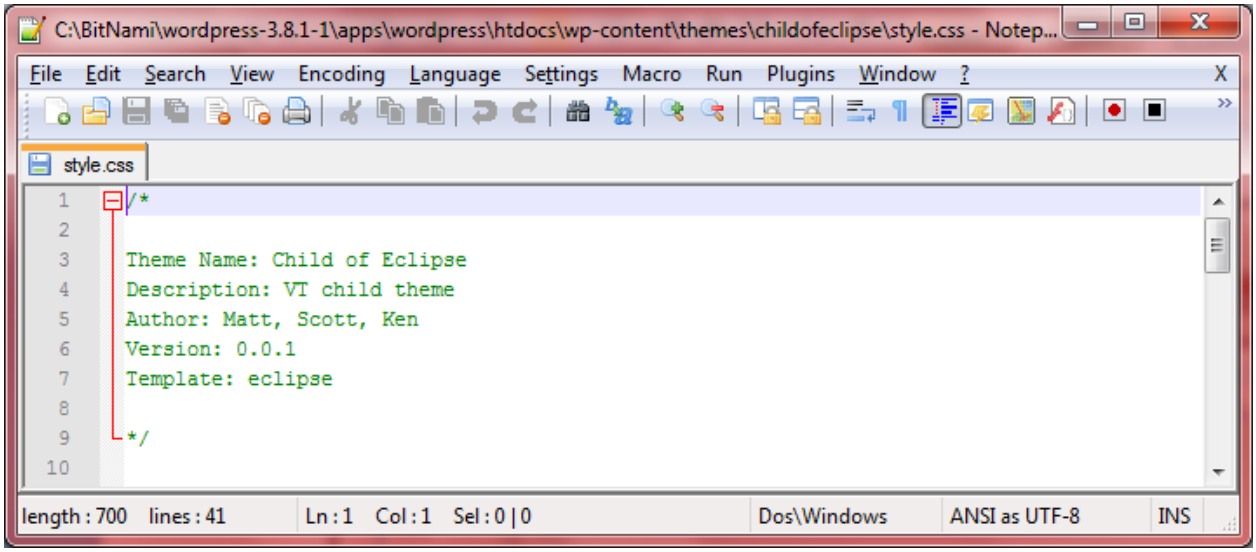


7. Create a new .css file (we used notepad++ but anything works as long as the format is a .css file) called style.css.

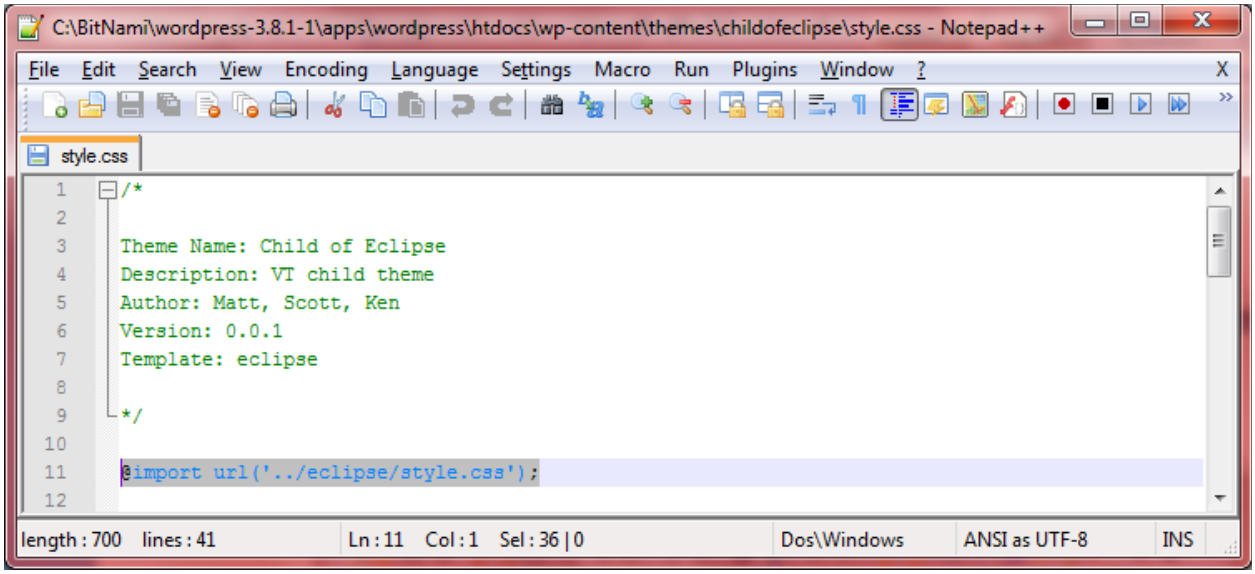


8. Open up the .css file to edit. The first thing that should be done is creating a header up top that states the information about the .css file.

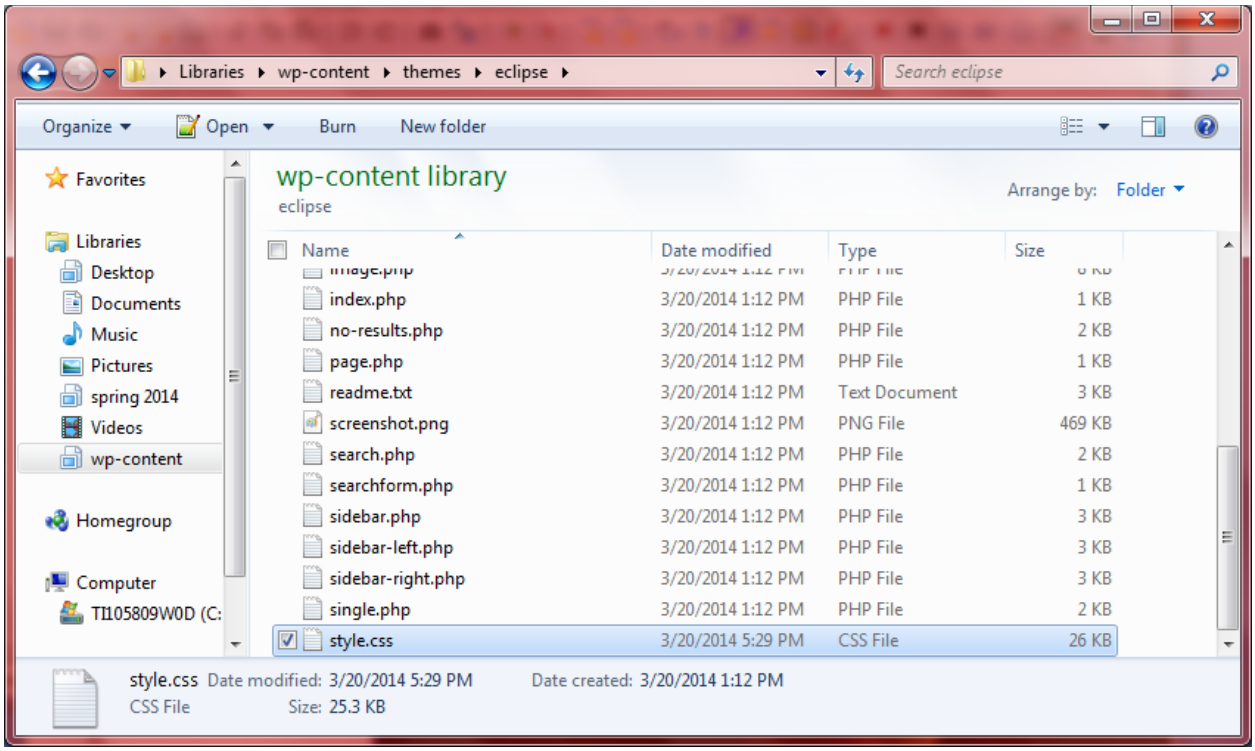
9.


C:\BitNami\wordpress-3.8.1-1\apps\wordpress\htdocs\wp-content\themes\childofeclipse\style.css - Notep...
File Edit Search View Encoding Language Settings Macro Run Plugins Window ? X
style.css
/*
Theme Name: Child of Eclipse
Description: VT child theme
Author: Matt, Scott, Ken
Version: 0.0.1
Template: eclipse
*/
length : 700 lines : 41 Ln : 1 Col : 1 Sel : 0 | 0 Dos\Windows ANSI as UTF-8 INS

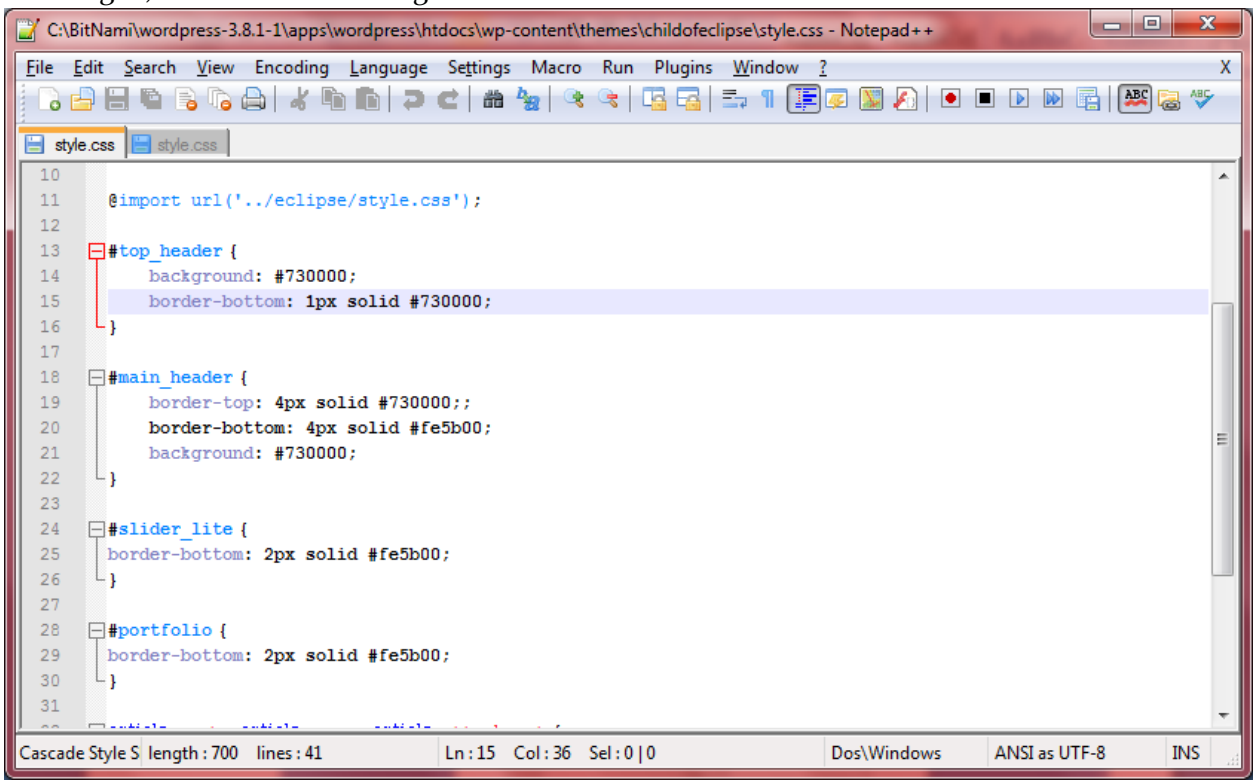
10. Next the actual eclipse style sheet needs to be imported into the current .css file in order to start modifying the file.
    Type "@import url('../eclipse/style.css');" as the first line of code


C:\BitNami\wordpress-3.8.1-1\apps\wordpress\htdocs\wp-content\themes\childofeclipse\style.css - Notepad++
File Edit Search View Encoding Language Settings Macro Run Plugins Window ? X
style.css
/*
Theme Name: Child of Eclipse
Description: VT child theme
Author: Matt, Scott, Ken
Version: 0.0.1
Template: eclipse
*/
@import url('../eclipse/style.css');
length : 700 lines : 41 Ln : 11 Col : 1 Sel : 36 | 0 Dos\Windows ANSI as UTF-8 INS

11. Next, in order to make modifications look through the actual style.css file in the parent Eclipse theme to find what changes you want to be made.



12. To make modifications in the child themed template, type in the style name that needs to be changed, and add in the changes that need to be made.



Developer's Manual

List of Files and their Uses

File Name	Description
style.css	CSS document for use with the child of eclipse theme.
Headway Layout – vt.edu template.json	Design for vt.edu Headway theme
Headway Skin – vt.edu Skin.json	Skin for the vt.edu Headway theme
Headway Layout – Old VT theme.json	Design for the Headway theme based on old layout.
Headway Skin – Old VT Skin.json	Skin for the Old VT theme.json

If a future developer wishes to continue this project, not much information on what we did is required. Only knowledge of how to create child themes, use CSS, and use PHP. To create themes for Headway, most of the required information is contained within the user manual.

Lessons Learned

We had learned many things through this project. We had encountered problems, learned about problems, tried to fix the problems, and gained new experience with Wordpress and the like. The first problem we encountered was the canceled meetings. These meetings were crucial to us as it allowed our group to show our clients the progress we made. This allowed for our clients to critique our work to tell us what changes must be made and what else must be added. To word around this, our group decided to model our templates as close to the www.vt.edu website and the http://www.cs.vt.edu/undergraduate/courses website since these two best display the new style of the VT website look and the old style of the VT website look. What we learned from this was to stick to schedule on our end and still complete templates as we were supposed to. Even if we could not get our clients to look at our progress, we compared our theme with the current sites, mentioned above, to get as much of an accurate theme as we could.

Another problem we had encountered was learning the Eclipse theme. Although the parent theme looked very promising in creating a child theme, it was hard for us to find information about modifying the CSS. The first action we took as a group was jumping into the Eclipse template to try to experiment with the CSS file. We had trouble correlating what names belonged to which section on the website. The makers of this theme, cyberchimps.com, has a website and forums that we looked through and after some time we were able to understand parts of the Eclipse theme layout that we had not before. It had also helped that we had access to Lynda. We used videos from www.Lynda.com to learn about Wordpress and how to create child themes, and make other modifications as we needed. What we learned from this was that we should identify the different file before we make changes, and we should write our own comments inside the parent theme file to help us understand what parts of the CSS file did.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the various people involved with this project; Jennifer Sparrow (innovation@vt.edu), Brian Broniak (bbroniak@vt.edu), and Crystal Farris (farrisc@vt.edu) for creating this project and giving our group guidance and information that have allowed us to create themes to the best of our abilities in the time allocated to us. We would also like to thank Dr. Edward Fox (fox@vt.edu) for introducing this project to our group in allowing us to create something that we hope will have an impact on the Virginia Tech online community. Without any one listed here, our group would not have been able to do what it was able to do and we thank you all for giving us an opportunity to start something that, one day, will be used.

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2014. Retrieved March 7, 2014. http://www.lynda.com/WordPress-training-tutorials/330-0.html.